

# The Canadian Army Journal

11.1 Spring 2008



## **Ambushes, IEDs and COIN: The French Experience**

*Mr. Eric Ouellet, PhD*

## **Manoeuvre Warfare Theory and Counter-insurgency Doctrine**

*Major Alex D. Haynes, CD*

## **The Future of Canadian Airborne Forces Part 1**

*Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew R. Jayne, CD*

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## **Tomorrow's Firepower**

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## **The Armed Private Military Company and the Canadian Forces: The Next Step in Contractor Support?**

*Major Shane Gifford, CD*

## **With Blinders On: The Black Watch and the Battle for Spycker, September 12-14 1944**

*David R. O'Keefe*

## **"JADEX"**

*Major Andrew B. Godefroy, CD Ph.D.*

## **Note to File—Reaching into the Oracle: Reflections of a Cold Warrior on the Issues and Challenges in Defence**

*Shaye K. Friesen*

## **Book Reviews**

# THE CANADIAN ARMY JOURNAL

## CANADA'S PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL ON ARMY ISSUES

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The Canadian Army Journal, a refereed forum of ideas and issues, is the official quarterly publication of Land Force Command. This periodical is dedicated to the expression of mature professional thought on the art and science of land warfare, the dissemination and discussion of doctrinal and training concepts, as well as ideas, concepts, and opinions by all army personnel and those civilians with an interest in such matters. Articles on related subjects such as leadership, ethics, technology, and military history are also invited and presented. The Canadian Army Journal is central to the intellectual health of the Army and the production of valid future concepts, doctrine, and training policies. It serves as a vehicle for the continuing education and professional development of all ranks and personnel in the Army, as well as members from other environments, government agencies, and academia concerned with army, defence, and security affairs.

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Unsolicited article manuscripts, research notes, book reviews, and points of interest are welcome. Articles should be 5000-7000 words exclusive of endnotes, research notes 1500-2500 words exclusive of endnotes, book review essays and reviews 500-1000 words, and points of interest 1000 words or less. Articles may be submitted in either official language. Authors must include a brief biography. Authors must supply any supporting tables, charts, maps, and images, and these should not be embedded in the article text. Articles may be submitted via email or regular mail. All submissions are peer reviewed and the Editor will notify contributors on the status of their submission. Further details regarding author submission guidelines are available at <http://www.army.forces.gc.ca/caj/>.

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# EDITORIAL—SOLDIERS AS WRITERS

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Major Andrew B. Godefroy, CD, Ph.D.



When we think about soldiers as writers, two images often come to mind. First is the popular image of the warrior scholar—the Sun Tsu, Clausewitz, or Machiavelli-type character that attempted to explain in as clear terms as one was able, how one thought wars could and should be fought. The second popular image is that of the diarist, such as John Le Couteur, an officer from New Brunswick who fought in the War of 1812 and left behind an insightful account of that conflict, or Private Donald Fraser of the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion, whose First World War diary remains a standard reference for scholars nearly a century after its creation. Yet whether one writes to think about war, or alternatively, capture its terrible memory, both play a critical role in defining the legacy of the armies in which they serve. Through the use of two very different approaches, both of these character types remind us of the terrible price that conflict can exact from those who choose to ignore its dangers, or forget the lessons that were purchased at so high a price. Most important, perhaps, both reveal in their own way why it is so important for some soldiers to also become writers, as well as how those writers help define the very nature of the army itself during a specific period in its history.

At the end of the First World War, for example, soldiers returning to Canada found themselves struggling to identify and define that which they had been exposed to, and luckily, managed to physically survive. Many of those who served overseas between 1914 and 1919 had graduated straight out of school and into military service, and most of them lacked the experience of longer life upon which to reflect, or the literary eloquence required to explain what they had experienced overseas in philosophical or abstract terms. Men like Sigfried Sassoon, Wilfrid Owen, and others were the exception to this situation, and these men also tended to be older. Sassoon, born in September 1886, only began publishing poetry regularly in 1917, when age, experience, and wisdom were at the disposal of his pen. From a Canadian perspective, John McRae was already a combat veteran of some experience when he joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force in 1914. Though not considered a poet by profession, a single attempt by him to identify and define his experience in the verses of 'In Flanders Fields' created a legacy far beyond what he ever could have imagined, and defined for every generation after the nature of commitment and sacrifice in war.

Our perception of Canada's Army in the Great War is very much defined and influenced by the writings of such men and women at that time. We depend on official accounts, private memoirs, as well as subsequent interpretations to understand how Canada's Army evolved through that difficult period. Today, all those who write for *The Canadian Army Journal* are playing a similar role, although one would hardly think themselves that they are actually doing so. Yet participation is critical, not only to the success of the CAJ, but to the larger goal of preserving the legacy of the army during this period in history, as well as defining how our actions today will be understood by generations tomorrow.

This issue of the CAJ presents a variety of articles examining both the theory and application of conflict. Both Eric Ouellette and David O'Keefe provide historical analyses of past conflicts, while Mr. Shaye Friesen and Major Alex Haynes examine issues surrounding theoretical and operational research. Majors Strickland and Gifford

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examine key subjects of interest to current army operations, whereas Lieutenant-Colonel Jayne and Captain McGregor consider the applications of army capabilities in the future. Supporting this is a brief biography of General Jacques Dextraze, as well as numerous book reviews examining a wide range of recent releases of interest. As always, we hope you enjoy this issue and welcome your comments and feedback to help us keep improving the journal.

## What the Editor is Reading ...

This quarter takes me both backwards and forwards in time. For past experiences I am reading Adrian Greaves' *Crossing the Buffalo: The Zulu War of 1879*, as well as *Kitchener's Sword Arm: The Life and Campaigns of General Sir Archibald Hunter*, by Archie Hunter. Though I'm only briefly into Greaves' book it is immensely readable and promises to shed interesting new light on the infamous battles at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. Hunter's biography of his great uncle also holds potential and I look forward to it. Looking ahead, the final book on my desk at the moment is Thomas K. Adam's, *The Army After Next: The First Post-Industrial Army*. A critical examination of the evolution of the US Army from the late 1980s Revolution in Military Affairs through to the War in Iraq, this book is sure to inform the reader. I'll provide reviews of these three books in the next issue of the journal.

## Correction!

In the last issue of the journal we incorrectly identified Lieutenant-Colonel Michel-Henri's St Louis' position and title in the Land Staff. LCol St Louis currently serves as Chief of Staff to COS Land Strat, who is Brigadier General Alain J. R. Tremblay.



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# ARMY UPDATE—THE JADEX PAPERS

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Back in Volume 9.3 (Winter 2006) of *The Canadian Army Journal*, the Director General Land Capability Development announced the creation of an occasional papers series to publish in a timely fashion current writing on subjects of interest to the Canadian Army. Beginning in the fall of 2007, the Directorate of Land Concepts and Designs (DLCD) released its first two occasional papers in this series—a series now named ‘JADEX PAPERS’ in honour of one of the Canadian Army’s legendary soldiers, General Jacques Alfred Dextraze CC, CMM, CBE, DSO, CD, LL.D. Affectionately known to his soldiers first as ‘Mad Jimmy’ and then later simply as ‘JADEX’, he joined the Fusiliers de Mont Royal in 1940 as a private soldier, and ended his military career 37 years later as the Chief of Defence Staff. An outstanding soldier with combat service in Normandy, the Netherlands, Korea and the Congo, DLCD is honoured to name these papers in recognition of his service to the Canadian Army. To learn more about General Dextraze’s amazing career, see the Army Biography in this issue of the CAJ.

JADEX Papers are published on an irregular basis as they become available. JADEX Papers are currently available online to all DND personnel via the Directorate of Land Concepts and Designs DIN website. Hardcopies may be also be obtained by both DND personnel and other interested parties through the submission of a written request on appropriate letterhead to: JADEX Papers Editor, c/o Directorate of Land Concepts and Designs, Sir Julian Byng Building (A-31), 4 Princess Mary Drive, CFB Kingston, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, K7K 7B4.

## JADEX PAPERS 1 (NOVEMBER 2007)



### **Brave New Conflicts: Emerging Global Technologies and Trends** **By Regan Reshke**

Throughout history, warfare has been profoundly altered by science and technology. Radar, radios, computers, lasers, GPS satellites, rifles, artillery, tanks—all these 20<sup>th</sup>-century military technologies and many others can trace their origins at least in part to science, technology and engineering research. Investments in science and technology have served the Army well and will continue to be the essential underpinning for maintaining superior Land Force war fighting capabilities. Science and technology research will be even more influential in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than it has been throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.





## JADEX PAPERS 2

### MODULARITY AND THE CANADIAN ARMY DISPERSION, COMMAND, AND BUILDING THE SUM OF ALL PARTS

MAJOR SEAN HACKETT  
DECEMBER 2007

CANADIAN ARMY  
DIRECTORATE OF  
LAND CONCEPTS  
AND DESIGNS



## JADEX PAPERS 2 (DECEMBER 2007)

### Modularity and the Canadian Army: Dispersion, Command, and Building the Sum of All Parts By Major Sean Hackett

A smaller force structure has affected the application of Allied theories of “modularity” in the Canadian Army, and a disciplined approach to modular principles will be required to best preserve a stable, combined-arms unit capability while minimizing reconfiguration disruptions prior to expeditionary force employment. The basic core component of a modular structure should be an established, multi-functional, self-sufficient battle group, tailored to achieve tactically decisive effects. Though technical connectivity for component parts of the force will be essential, it will be the “connected” nature of the unit which will prove paramount. Emphasis must continue to be placed upon how an appropriate mission command climate can build trust, cohesion and unity of purpose, both within a national force and across coalition lines.



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# AMBUSHES, IEDS AND COIN: THE FRENCH EXPERIENCE

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Mr. Eric Ouellet, Ph.D.

*The aptitude which such opponents as regular armies have so often in these campaigns to cope with, display in harassing the troops who have penetrated into their fastnesses, is known to all. They revel in stratagems and artifice. They prowl about waiting for their opportunity to pounce down upon small parties moving without due precaution. The straggler and camp follower are their natural prey.<sup>1</sup>*

The Canadian Forces' (CF) involvement in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kandahar province has been a reminder to Canadians of how asymmetric enemies can be effective. Among the enemy's actions, one of the most prominent is its extensive use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Although IEDs are a serious tactical threat, they pose the greatest danger at the strategic level.

Most foreign troops involved in ISAF tend to have, in their respective homelands, limited or qualified political support for their mission. In some countries, every casualty caused by IEDs, and more generally ambushes, carries with it the potential to weaken public support for troop deployments. Ultimately, weakening public support may lead to a political decision to withdraw troops, and eventually to the collapse of the ISAF mission. The tactical use of ambushes and IEDs should not let us forget that their ultimate purpose is to generate effects at the strategic level. Any comprehensive decisions on how best to deal with ambushes and IEDs should therefore recognize the strategic effects sought by our adversaries and not only attempt to counter these effects tactically but also at the strategic level. But this can be very tricky.

A recent example of this problem is the approach used by Dutch forces in Afghanistan. They have limited their movements to areas that they control well and have emphasized reconstruction in those areas, hence reducing the risk of falling victim to ambushes and IEDs.<sup>2</sup> This may have been a tactically and operationally sound approach, but a strategically questionable one. On the one hand, by limiting their losses and focusing on humanitarian work, the Dutch military is alleviating pressure from the Dutch public to pull out of Afghanistan. On the other hand, this tactical decision ensures that the insurgents will have an easier time in other parts of Uruzgan province and makes it likely that the counter-insurgency fight will be more difficult in the long run.

Some may think that because a technical or tactical solution to IEDs would eliminate their strategic threat, all our energies should be directed at finding such a solution. It is, without a doubt, imperative to do everything possible to protect our troops against ambushes and IEDs. However, it is equally imperative to avoid the dangerous illusion that anti-IED techniques constitute a strategic "silver bullet." In insurgencies and other asymmetric conflicts, beyond the enemy's resolve, imagination and cleverness are their greatest strength. New measures to defeat our countermeasures will be found, and the cycle of measure and countermeasure will continue.

This paper proposes to shed strategic light on the issues of ambushes and IEDs in the context of foreign interventions in counter-insurgency missions through a series of short case studies, showing how armed forces have dealt with ambushes, IEDs, mines and booby traps in various eras. The purpose of these case studies is not to conduct a systematic analysis of tactical or even operational level solutions or to provide a full

description of the political events surrounding them. It is instead to illustrate that tactical and operational level solution to ambushes and IEDs have contributed to setting the conditions for strategic success in past conflicts, but unfortunately they have not been the determining factor. In other words, tactical and operational level solutions are crucial but not sufficient to deal with such threats.

Three cases studies are presented below: the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century French operations in Algeria, and the French Indochina War. These are followed by a discussion of the key elements that they have in common with respect to the strategic dimension of ambushes and IEDs. Some concluding remarks complete the study.



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## Case Studies

This text focuses on substantial counter-insurgency operations in different parts of the world, namely Algeria and Indochina. The successful 19<sup>th</sup> century operations in Algeria provide a contrast to 20<sup>th</sup> century operations in Algeria and Indochina, which in spite of having much greater access to technical and human resources, were failures. These two modern cases were selected to illustrate that tactical and operational level success in dealing with ambushes and IEDs must also be accompanied by a strategic level solution. In other words, ambushes and IEDs, when used effectively by insurgents, should be also considered as strategic weapons. As well, all three French cases were selected to provide a contrasting perspective to better-known counter-insurgency operations, particularly the Malaya Emergency and the Vietnam War.<sup>3</sup>

Some may argue that more recent cases of success might yield better insights into present-day challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq. This may be correct, but there are good grounds to ask whether these cases are applicable to our contemporary challenges. Although there were several successful domestic counter-insurgency operations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—including those against the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, the Shining Path in Peru and the Chechens in the Russian Federation—they are situated in a different strategic environment because they involved a direct challenge to the authority of the counterinsurgent state. Expeditionary counterinsurgencies pose a different challenge, as strategic priorities and essential state interests are much more difficult to define.

Since 1945, only one major expeditionary counter-insurgency operation involving Western armed forces was successful: the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960). This operation is of questionable relevance to the Afghan and Iraqi conflicts because it was unique in many ways. The insurgents in Malaya were mostly from a minority group that was easily identifiable: Chinese Malays. They received relatively little external support so that the international dimension of the conflict remained limited in scope. The British government had already sold its solution, independence, to the majority of the population before the insurgency became a serious problem. Finally, the British public was not much involved or interested in the counter-insurgency or aware of its fate, and thus had a limited impact on the campaign's conduct and outcome. In other words, the Malayan insurgency, in contrast to most counterinsurgencies involving Western armed forces in an expeditionary operation, is not good example by which to approximate the more complex conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Since the Malayan Emergency there have been some minor operations that were successful, such as those in Brunei (1962-1966) and Oman (1962-1976), but the very fact that they were perceived as minor operations limits their utility for comparison to today's counter-insurgency challenges. Perhaps keeping counter-insurgency operations outside the realm of public affairs is the key lesson to be learned from these three operations, but in our increasingly globalized world, this option is less and less probable. Furthermore, the present-day challenges are already out in the open and require strategic solutions to succeed.



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### Three French Experiences in Counter-insurgency

Over the last 200 years, the French Army has engaged in many counter-insurgency campaigns. Although the best known ones, Indochina (1945-1954) and Algeria (1954-1962), were strategically unsuccessful, France had been quite successful in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, like most other colonial powers, in meeting challenges to its rule. Some contend that insurgents of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were less organized, numerous and well equipped than those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that it is therefore, perilous to make comparisons.<sup>4</sup> This study takes issue with this assertion. As the case study of France's conquest of Algeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century shows, the enemy was able to mount an effective and well-thought-out resistance organized around an Islamist ideology. Despite the massive military advantage of the French, it was almost successful in defeating the

French forces during the general insurrection of 1845-46. France's counter-insurgency operations in Algeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century illustrate military challenges that seem timeless if one is not mesmerized by technological issues and understands that ideology can take many forms. The later cases of French military involvement in counter-insurgency in Indochina and Algeria are also useful, for they show not only that the same themes reappear a century later, but also how the split between the tactical/operational and strategic realms became the chink in the armour that was exploited by the enemy through the use of ambushes and IEDs.

## Algeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1839-1857)

### General Description

France invaded Algeria in 1830, attacking and seizing its capital Algiers. Although many reasons were stated for embarking on this military operation, it was undertaken essentially for reasons of prestige.<sup>5</sup> After losing many of its colonies in the 1700s and the defeat of Napoleon, France sought to recover its former status as major global power. The actual conquest of Algeria was accomplished in stages, starting from the Mediterranean Sea and moving towards the south. However, France did not become involved in substantial counter-insurgency operations until 1839, by which time it had to govern large portions of Algeria's inland territory. By 1842, the French military commitment had reached 100,000 troops,<sup>6</sup> a major endeavour for a country that then had approximately 30 million citizens and was still surrounded by unfriendly neighbours.



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By 1839, the resistance to the French forces had coalesced around the charismatic figure of Emir Abd-el-Kader (not unlike Osama bin Laden). He was pursued for years in a game of cat and mouse, and only being captured in 1851. Abd-el-Kader was able to stage his insurgency from Morocco, which, like present-day Pakistan, had an ambiguous attitude towards the insurgents. Like Iraq, Algeria is a multi-ethnic country and even the capture of Abd-el-Kader did not stop the insurgency, merely displacing its centre from the Arab populations to the Kabyles who live mostly in mountainous areas. It was not until 1857 that the country (with the exception of the Great Desert in the south) was pacified, 27 years after the fall of Algiers. As in present-day Afghanistan and Iraq, the insurgents were fighting foreign troops whom they considered to be both invaders and religious infidels.

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## Casualties

It is difficult to determine the exact number of casualties that the French sustained during the period between 1839 and 1857, but it was quite substantial. The present-day academic literature tends to focus only on casualties caused directly by enemy fire, which serves to minimize French losses. One can suspect that minimizing French casualties plays well nowadays with those who share a strong political commitment to anti-colonialism. For instance, Lucien Bodard is quoted as estimating the death toll to be about 10,000.<sup>7</sup> But a quick look at the French Army archives gives a different picture. For the years 1840 to 1842 alone, the number of deaths has been estimated at 12,500.<sup>8</sup> As well, memoirs and letters from that era are filled with stories of casualties, providing evidence of numbers that would be considered quite large by present day standards and lending credence to the archival numbers. For example, one can read in a letter dated March 1840 that the French lost 300 soldiers during operations around the city of Oran.<sup>9</sup> Another letter describes the loss of 800 men from a garrison of 1,200 in August 1840 at Millianah.<sup>10</sup> In January 1846, in the Setif region, the French lost 150 men in a day to frostbite while engaged in the endless pursuit of insurgents.<sup>11</sup> This last example shows that the real death toll needs to be based on not only the number of casualties directly caused by enemy fire, but also on those caused by diseases, exposure to the elements and exhaustion attributable to the combination of ambushes and various types harassing techniques used by the insurgents. Chasing the enemy was quite deadly for the French Army of those days. These insurgent tactics were, like today's IEDs, the main cause of casualties for the counterinsurgents,<sup>12</sup> and dealing with them was already identified as a key problem for a conventional army.<sup>13</sup>

## Tactical and Operational Adjustments

To deal with the insurgents' tactics, the French Army went through a lengthy learning process. Improvements were incremental, ranging from the introduction of the kepi hat to the selection of horses better suited for the Algerian climate. As well, the French created a network of offices called "bureaux arabes," which were used to improve relations in pacified regions and collect human intelligence. The main improvements were made during the command of Marshal Robert Bugeaud, who arrived in Algeria in 1841. Among other things, Bugeaud lightened the standard equipment carried by soldiers, replaced horses and carts with donkeys to carry supplies, used only light artillery and employed elite infantry to escort field ambulances (which were extensively targeted by the insurgents). These tactical improvements were accompanied by operational level changes as well.

Bugeaud's predecessor, Marshal Charles Valée, opted for multiple small garrisons. This system was effective in holding territories not too far from larger centres such as Algiers and Oran. However, when the French Army went back on the offensive and tried to extend its control inland, it became clear that Valée's model had not been effective. Bugeaud, upon his arrival, immediately modified the garrison system. He established large garrisons that were employed as staging bases for large patrolling columns and supplied a few times a year by large and well-armed convoys.<sup>14</sup> However, the system took a long time to set up. In 1851, French General Yusuf was still advocating the development of a system of very mobile columns assigned to a specific area and supported by well-supplied fortified positions, to crush insurgents in their own territories.<sup>15</sup> The system he proposed was to be used again one hundred years later under the name *quadrillage* by the French Army in Algeria.

## Strategic Context and Solution

The strategic context of the Algerian campaign is actually the source of its success. Although there were a few voices raised in France against the mission, there was a large



political consensus on the necessity of succeeding. The only real debates were about the methods to be used and the costs of the war. Eventually in 1841, the French government organized a commission, led by the famous writer Alexis de Tocqueville, to study what needed to be done. De Tocqueville produced two reports, one in 1841 and another in 1847.<sup>16</sup> He proposed what was construed as the “middle way.” De Tocqueville’s position was that the Algerians would have to submit to French rule under a unified political system; France should not try to create delegated self-rule, nor should it engage in an extermination campaign.



De Tocqueville’s views were very much in keeping with the approach taken in the field by Bugeaud, in which tribes submissive to France were protected by French troops while those who opposed France were victims of systematic raids or *razzias* that attempted to destroy their livelihood until submission was gained.<sup>17</sup> The insurgents eventually adopted the same approach in dealing with tribes supportive of the French rule. Bugeaud’s action essentially destroyed the foundation of Algerian society piece by piece until the country was pacified.<sup>18</sup> These methods were quite brutal, but the French public did not seriously object to them. For example, one of the darkest episodes happened in June 1845, when Colonel Aimable Pelissier gave orders to smoke out insurgents hidden in a cave near Mostaganem.<sup>19</sup> His action killed the insurgents as well as the rest of their tribe, women and children included, causing a major scandal in France. But Pelissier was never punished for it, and in fact, was elevated to the rank of Marshal in 1855.

This approach to counter-insurgency eventually became the standard colonial practice. As Callwell sums it, up at end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in colonial warfare, “warriors such as form the enemy in small wars simply disperse when they are worsted. They disappear in all directions, but unless awed by their experience into submission they are ready to collect again should an opportunity offer at a later period.”<sup>20</sup>

## Lessons Learned

The application of the Bugeaud system was initially the cause of further rebellions in the country that culminated in the general revolt of 1845–46, in which the French Army came close to disintegration.<sup>21</sup> The assessments that were made resembled very closely what one might read about the present American involvement in Iraq.<sup>22</sup> What prevented the collapse of the French Army was the destruction of Abd-el-Kader’s retinue (smala) in

March 1846, in which the insurgency lost most of its command and control capabilities. Abd-el-Kader, however, was not caught for another five years, and not until the French Army launched an expedition into Morocco, a sovereign state. In hindsight it is clear that the insurgency was defeated not by the tactical success of March 1846, but for the most part by the ongoing commitment of the French government and public to pacification and colonization, combined with the systematic use of razzias that essentially exhausted the insurgency at its very roots by forcing the population to be entirely dependent on French rule for survival. This commitment survived through political turmoil in France, particularly the 1848 Revolution that led to the creation of the Second Republic, and the coup by Louis-Philippe that brought the creation of the Second Empire in 1852. Even later, after the defeat by Prussia in 1870 and the creation of the Third Republic, French commitment to the colonial enterprise remained strong.

The methods used during the colonial era were certainly morally reprehensible, and could not be used by contemporary Western democracies. Fundamental social values have changed and substantially modified the strategic environment since that time. Yet, the dynamics of the insurgency they were facing had many similarities with those of today. The insurgents used asymmetric tactics with great effectiveness. But the ruthless tactical and operational measures used by the counterinsurgents were only successful because the tacit support of the French population was available.



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## Indochina (1946-1954)

### General description

In early 1945, the Japanese took complete control of Indochina and, in doing so, demonstrated to the local population that non-Westerners could defeat the French. Following the post-war restoration of nominal French control, Indochina remained ripe for a sustained revolt against colonial rule. From 1946 to 1954, France became increasingly engaged in a major counter-insurgency campaign in Indochina. At first, the threat was not immediately recognized as being serious, but it soon became a strategic imperative for France to keep its colony, and prevent a precedent to be emulated across its colonial empire. Furthermore, after its defeat in June 1940 by Germany, France was engaged in reinstating itself as a major power, and would not allow a colonial conflict to



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be lost to a gang of insurgents. Over time, the French military commitment, including auxiliaries and Vietnamese allies, reached nearly 450,000 troops.<sup>23</sup> As metropolitan France was still recovering from the destruction caused by the Second World War, this commitment rapidly became economically unsustainable. The conflict was eventually reframed from a colonial war to a struggle against international communist expansion in order to obtain support from the United States. By 1954, the US was paying for about 80% of the war effort.<sup>24</sup>

The insurgents were inspired by revolutionary Marxism, and were known as the Viet Minh. They were led by Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap. Their doctrine was inspired by Mao Zedong's theory of Guerrilla Warfare calling for a phased movement from an unconventional conflict towards a conventional one. But the conflict never evolved into a full-fledged conventional war. In fact, the key strategy of the Viet Minh was typical of a modern insurgency, simply expressed by Ho Chi Minh in 1947 when he stated that "the key to the problem of Indochina is to be found in the domestic situation in France."<sup>25</sup> By 1949, the insurgents started to receive substantial support from Red China. After the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, peace negotiations moved quickly, leading to the Geneva Accord of 1954, which created four independent states in Indochina: communist North Vietnam, pro-Western South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

## Casualties

With the arrival of motorization, new terms appeared to describe what previous armed forces had faced when dealing with unconventional enemies. One of the best known was the expression "Street without Joy,"<sup>26</sup> from the title of a Bernard Fall's 1961 book describing the difficulties of the French Army in Indochina. The *Street without Joy* (the label "Ambush Alley" has been used too) was actually a stretch of Colonial Highway 1, locked between the South China Sea and the mountains of central Vietnam, where numerous ambushes and improvised mines caused many casualties to the French Army.

According to Fall, the total losses for the French Union and allied forces in Indochina amounted to about 94,000 troops. Although it is difficult to find accurate statistics, as Jacques Chirac mentioned in a speech<sup>27</sup> commemorating those who fell at Dien Bien Phu, even during that conventional battle many casualties were still caused by ambushes. In fact, the French used to call the Indochina war *la sale guerre* (dirty war) to highlight how ambushes, mines and IEDs were so much part of the conflict. It is instructive to note that a few years later the Americans faced the same problem on the same stretch of Colonial Highway 1, and Fall himself tragically died there from a mine blast in 1967.

## Tactical and Operational Adjustments

From a tactical standpoint, the French Army eventually improved by providing better training to its troops in detecting and defusing IEDs based on lessons learned, and by using deep patrolling in a more offensive way so that their troops were less at risk of being ambushed. The improvements were so significant that in 1951 the Viet Minh had to go back to using guerrilla tactics, and thus deviate from Mao's theory of revolutionary warfare.<sup>28</sup> These tactical improvements reached their optimum level in 1953 with successful operations such as Castor and Mouette, in which large areas of the Tonkin territory were cleared of the insurgent presence.<sup>29</sup>

These same tactical improvements were incorporated into a larger operational approach relying on the use of fortified positions and highly mobile patrol missions. After the so-called battle of Colonial Highway 4 in September and October 1950, the French Army proceeded to reduce the number of small posts across the country concentrating its forces in fortified positions. As a French officer quoted by Fall said in 1953, and reminiscent of the logic of the conflict in Algeria in the 19th century, there was a:

French fortified line around the Delta which we call the 'Marshal de Lattre Line'—about 2200 bunkers forming 900 forts. We are going to deny the Communists access to the 8 million people in this Delta and the 3 million tons of rice it produces. We will eventually starve them out and deny them access to the population. . . . Most of these villages were, in fact, controlled by the communists. . . .<sup>30</sup>

This operational approach, although providing a greater degree of force concentration, remained problematic, because it was personnel intensive. It was criticized for draining good troops away from aggressive patrolling missions.<sup>31</sup> It was only the systematic use of airborne and Legionnaire forces as part of pro-active or quickly reactive counterinsurgent operations that a measure of success was obtained. This was known as the Navarre Plan, after the French Commander in Indochina. Nevertheless, the Viet Minh were quite effective at expanding operations elsewhere, forcing the French to defend Laos as well as the Tonkin territory. A surge of troops was requested, but it was denied by the French government because any additional troops would have to be drawn from conscripted soldiers—which would have been too high a political price.<sup>32</sup> As Irving noted, Pierre Mendès-France's view was that "France had neither the men nor the money to solve the Indochina problem by force, unless of course she was prepared to pay the high price of sending out conscripts and retarding her own economic recovery."<sup>33</sup>



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## Strategic Context and Solution

Some may think that the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954 was the turning point of the war; mostly a conventional fight designed to protect Laos from Viet Minh operations. However, the war was lost in France on the political battlefield, as Ho Chi Minh foresaw in 1947.<sup>34</sup> Dien Bien Phu was, from a military standpoint, a minor defeat for a French and allied contingent of nearly half a million men. The Viet Minh had much greater casualties, many of whom came from their best trained troops.<sup>35</sup>

The *sale guerre* took its toll on French public opinion, and over time seriously challenged belief in the legitimacy of the colonial enterprise.<sup>36</sup> And there were an increasing number of voices calling for a negotiated solution in a context where the

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French government was particularly weak under the institutions of the Fourth Republic.<sup>37</sup> The French government attempted to address some of the most pressing political and social problems found in Indochina, but this was mostly a matter of too little, too late.<sup>38</sup> The limited legitimacy that the colonial regime had among the Indochinese population was irremediably lost.

## Lessons Learned

The French forces in Indochina had to deal constantly with ambushes, mines and booby traps. In spite of improving their counter-insurgency approach at the tactical and operational level, they still sustained losses that were quite substantial. The *sale guerre* was new and deeply problematic, but, unfortunately for the French, there was no strategic solution to the strategic problem that it caused. Though the strategic commitment to keeping their colony intact was strong at the onset, it weakened gradually to the point where defeat became an acceptable option.

Certainly one of the weakest points in the French approach to the Indochina conflict was the lack of political and social measures to bring the indigenous society back into a wider French partnership. It took a long time for the French to realize that handling an insurgency is about dealing with the population as much as dealing with the insurgents.

The ancestors who fought in Algeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century understood that, although they were using extreme means to achieve their end. Many mistakes were made during the conflict, but they provided a foundation for the French to develop a new approach to counter-insurgency in Algeria a few years later.

## Algeria in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (1954-1962)

### General Description

In 1954, France was just coming to the unsuccessful end of a major counter-insurgency operation in Indochina when it was drawn into a second one in Algeria. This time, however, the French government perceived things differently. Algeria was just across the Mediterranean Sea, only hours from Marseilles. As well, over one million French settlers were living there among eight million indigenous Muslims. With its large non-Muslim population, Algeria was considered from an administrative point of view as an integral part of metropolitan France. Hence, in 1954, François Mitterand's slogan "l'Algérie c'est la France" (Algeria is France) was quite meaningful and illustrated the new resolve in dealing with the growing insurgency. To ensure that Algeria would remain French, the government in Paris eventually committed 400,000 troops, many of them reservists and conscripts. Lastly, it is important to note that the experience with revolutionary warfare in Indochina prompted the French armed forces to develop their own countermeasure aimed at controlling the population: counter-revolutionary warfare.<sup>39</sup>

The enemy eventually coalesced around the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN), which was inspired by both nationalism and revolutionary ideologies. The FLN was never able to mount any substantial military engagements, nor did it ever effectively use formations larger than a company in size. The FLN essentially employed guerrilla warfare and terrorism as its main tactics. Not only did the FLN use ambushes and improvised mines against the French Army, but it also mounted terrorist attacks against the non-Muslim population and Muslims collaborating with the French regime. As well, the FLN organized demonstrations and terrorist attacks in mainland France. The FLN received most of its external military support from Egypt, whose ruler, Nasser, was committed to fighting European colonialism. The FLN was able to use neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco as operating bases until the French Army effectively sealed the borders. The FLN strategy was aimed at increasing the costs of counter-insurgency to

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an unsustainable level while using the increased repression by the French to garner further support from indigenous Algerians.<sup>40</sup>

## Casualties

The challenge caused by ambushes, booby traps, explosive devices and mines was also serious in Algeria. The death toll for the French forces was about 28,000.<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to determine causes of death, but the French Ministry of Defence stated that nearly 16,000 died in combat or as a result of unconventional attacks (*attentats*).<sup>42</sup> Given the FLN tactics, it is reasonable to assume that ambushes and mines caused the vast majority of those deaths. In the early parts of the conflict, the French Army, police posts and patrols were ambushed on a regular basis by FLN guerrilla units, resulting in heavy casualties.<sup>43</sup> Losses caused by ambushes and mines continued until the very end of the conflict.<sup>44</sup>



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## Tactical and Operational adjustments

The ongoing ambushes faced by the French Army, the spread of the insurgency and the terrorist attacks against the European population of Algeria forced the French to take a series of countermeasures. In December 1956, General Raoul Salan was named Commander-in-Chief in Algeria; he rapidly designed and implemented a counter-insurgency plan based on the lessons that he had learned in Indochina. A system known as *quadrillage* was put in place dividing the country into a grid. A permanent force was assigned to patrol and pacify each square created by the grid. This operational innovation was only possible because the French government agreed to build up troop numbers with reservists and conscripts.<sup>45</sup> Tactically, it took some time for the French Army to adjust to counter-guerrilla warfare,<sup>46</sup> but lessons learned and better use of human intelligence from pro-French Muslims eventually paid off. Once pacification was successful in an area, the Army was assigned to support civil-military reconstruction units known as *Sections Administratives Spécialisées* dedicated to re-establishing normal life in communities by working on projects and distributing food and medicine. To



further support the overall implementation of the plan, a counter-insurgency training centre was opened in 1957 in the Algerian town of Arzew to train incoming officers on a variety of topics ranging from booby trap detection to Muslim sociology to development of informer networks.<sup>47</sup>

The second major step was the creation of a *Réserve Générale* (RG) made up of elite and mobile forces striking wherever concentrations of FLN guerrillas were found. At first, the use of the RG was problematic because there was poor coordination between the RG and the forces engaged in *quadrillage*. Often times, the efforts to win over the population were undermined by the ruthless methods of the paratroopers and legionnaires that made up the RG.<sup>48</sup> The demands upon the RG exceeded its capacity to act, even though it enjoyed substantial air transport capability.<sup>49</sup> Local *quadrillage* forces had to be supported by local militias to hold up until the RG could be brought in, which gave the FLN enough time to flee. Hence, French positions could never be fully secured, even in pacified areas.

The final major step, which also called for large numbers of troops, was the fortification and sealing of the borders, particularly the Morice Line along Tunisian border. In 1957-58, about 80,000 troops were defending the borders, 300,000 were involved in *quadrillage* and only 15,000 were assigned to the RG.<sup>50</sup>



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## Strategic Context and Solution

By 1960, the French Army had essentially won the military battle in Algeria. The country was for the most part pacified, losses were at a tolerable 30,000, and even large segments of the Muslim population were on the French side, providing about 100,000 troops known as "harkis." The lessons from Indochina were effectively learned and implemented. However, France still lost its Algerian territory, granting it independence in 1962 with the ratification of the Evian Accord.

The tactical battle engaged in the capital of Algiers in 1957 was a success for the French Army in essentially eradicating FLN terrorism. The brutal methods used by the paratroopers, however, essentially brought strategic defeat to France. Certainly, the public denunciations of the paratroopers' methods during the Battle of Algiers were instrumental in bringing defeat to the French, but one needs to look further.

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The FLN clearly adjusted its military actions so that they fit into a plan to win politically and diplomatically from outside Algeria.<sup>51</sup> The FLN also waged a terrorism campaign inside metropolitan France in 1959-1960 that succeeded in showing that the war extended beyond the boundaries of Algeria and would continue until France acquiesced. In 1961, the FLN was able to organize large demonstrations in Paris that reinforced among the French the sense of hopelessness and protested the dishonourable ways in which France had conducted military operations.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the FLN was working on a critical fault line in French society opened by the Indochina conflict and running through its commitment to colonialism.<sup>53</sup> French society was profoundly divided, and the war simply widened the existing division,<sup>54</sup> which found its ultimate illustration when part of the French Army mutinied upon learning that the French government was negotiating a settlement with the FLN. According to some analysts, it was the extensive use of reservists and conscripts that brought the war too close to home and set the political stage for strategic defeat.<sup>55</sup> The Battle of Algiers was perhaps a political turning point, but it was a continuation of the same tactics that were seen first-hand by many French citizen-soldiers. French assessments of civilian casualties in Algeria range between 300,000 and 400,000 deaths, while some Algerian evaluations can be as high as 1,500,000 deaths.

## **Lessons Learned**

The counter-insurgency effort in Algeria in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is very instructive. While effective use of tactical and operational counter-insurgency approaches can lead to military success, it cannot stave off strategic defeat. The FLN used ambushes, mines and terrorism as strategic weapons aimed directly at fuelling existing doubts about the colonial enterprise. France had no strategic response to these attacks. The French Army made the serious mistake of believing that tactical and operational responses, supplemented by various attempts to win over the population, would suffice to deal with the threat posed by the unconventional war that the FLN was waging.

Another important lesson of this conflict is that strong resolve from a country's political elite to engage in counter-insurgency is not enough. In democratic states, the political elite can maintain a show of unity for a time, but in the long run, that unity will be seriously eroded. This is particularly true in the context of counter-insurgency, which is almost by definition a type of conflict that endures for years. The use of conscripts only exacerbates pressures on politicians to pull back from overseas conflicts and reinforces the widening of the political fault lines that exist in any democratic society.

## **Discussion**

The cases presented above illustrate that in different eras and conflicts, ambushes and IEDs have been problematic, and various tactical and operational level solutions have been found and implemented. But in the end, it is the strategic context that has been determinant. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Western democracies not only continue to be very sensitive to any accusations of neo-colonialism or violation of human rights, but they are now also very sensitive to casualties. For this reason, countering ambushes and IEDs is not strictly speaking a military issue, although it occurs in a military context and calls for the use of military means. To deal with such threats effectively, one must understand that they relate directly to the political and social realms, which are the real targets of ambush and IED campaigns mounted by insurgents. Tactics such as ambushes and IEDs are used by insurgents to gradually sap the foreign counter-insurgency forces' political will, and to destabilize the social foundations of the political regime that the counterinsurgents are trying to establish and protect. If counter-ambush and counter-IED efforts remain at the tactical and operational levels, then the insurgents can keep the strategic initiative. Our inability to fully integrate counter-ambush and counter-IED

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measures into a comprehensive strategic construct should be considered one of our centres of gravity (in a manoeuvrist sense). The more focused on tactical and operational matters a conventional armed force is, the weaker it is in dealing with strategic weapons such as ambushes and IEDs.

This weakness becomes quite obvious when one thinks about how counter-insurgency plays in the context of the classical dilemma in operational art between concentration and dispersion of force. Concentration of force provides better opportunities for force protection and offensive actions, but leaves large geographical areas without a significant military presence. Dispersion of force allows a greater coverage of territory, but exposes smaller formations to attack and makes offensive operations harder to prepare. Various answers to this dilemma can be found in conventional warfare, depending on a variety of factors such as force size, terrain, firepower, mobility and intelligence. However, this dilemma is much more difficult to resolve in the context of modern counter-insurgency warfare, because establishing security to re-establish social order is politically necessary, while protecting smaller units is also necessary. In other words, the local population needs to be protected locally against insurgents to win its support, so dispersion appears appropriate. Yet, Western expeditionary forces tend to have a political “domestic second front” where casualties severely affect public support for their mission. Thus, given this domestic imperative, concentration for better force protection appears more appropriate.

In societies fully committed to counter-insurgency, the strategic dimension of ambushes and IEDs does not play as much because it can be safely taken for granted. The French in 19th century Algeria were able to find an answer to the dilemma between concentration and dispersion without having to worry too much about how it played strategically. It is in this context that one can understand how Charles Callwell could argue that the ultimate solution had been found to the dilemma described above. Based on the European colonial experience, he concluded that the key was a series of fortified positions with large stockpiles (and therefore re-supplied less often), combined with highly mobile forces to strike at the enemy and supported by an effective human intelligence network. In his view:

The “drives” instituted in the closing days of the South African war [1899-1902] may be called the last word in strategy directed against guerrilla antagonists. In principle the drives combined the system of sub-dividing the theatre of war into sections, of utilizing highly mobile troops, of acting with the utmost energy, and of getting the full benefit of fortified posts. . . . In no class of warfare is a well organized and well served intelligence department more essential than in that against guerrillas.<sup>56</sup>

To fully appreciate Callwell's view, however, one has to remember that for him and his contemporaries, “Guerrilla warfare, in fact, means almost of necessity petty annoyance rather than operations of a dramatic kind.”<sup>57</sup> What was perceived in the past as “petty annoyance” has now become a major issue.

The French also found answers in Indochina and Algeria during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the strategic dimension was not integrated into the solution. They continued to take it for granted or, at best, delegated the issue entirely to the politicians. They failed to recognize that a new strategic era was emerging, in which full political commitment to expeditionary counter-insurgency was no longer available.

Interestingly enough, Stephen Blank in his analysis of the Soviet war in Afghanistan shows that the same approach described by Callwell was eventually put in place, almost one hundred years later. The Soviets' operational approach was as follows:



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The overall resort to a system of deeply mined and echeloned defensive strongpoints and installations guarding urban and logistical infrastructural centers helped shape the use of forces for both defensive and rapid turnaround to counteroffensive operations. Special forces and airborne forces were frequently assigned to such operations. And the continuing employment of combined active and passive defenses and fortifications successfully stymied Mujaheddin offensives in 1988-90.<sup>58</sup>

The Soviet Union was not what we would consider a democracy, but it was also not immune to the challenges of the new strategic era. The Soviets too, failed to see that the strategic dimension of the conflict was an issue for both the military and the politicians. Hence, victory or defeat in the end depends on strategic conditions, and this is true for both democracies and dictatorships.

These challenges are very much part of the present conflict in Iraq. It is too soon to know if the operational decision to increase the number of troops in Iraq and the apparent decrease in violence will have a permanent effect. But it is clear that the Americans again face the same fundamental dilemma of how to get the most out of concentration and dispersion while holding the ground, protecting the population and hunting the insurgents. Additional troops on the ground can also create more opportunities for insurgents to inflict casualties through ambushes and IEDs.

It is also interesting to note that the debate about how to deal with the situation in Iraq is reflective of older questions that previous counterinsurgents have had to answer.

The tactical cycle of measures and countermeasures continues, as mines become bigger and are buried deeper and types of emplacements become more numerous. In response to the US surge, as *Time* reported:

Some insurgent commanders fell back on tactics that worked before, such as moving their operations into areas where there are relatively few US troops. . . . They began to attack new targets, like US helicopters and important bridges that connect Baghdad to the rest of the country. "These were all new kinds of attacks, and there were so many of them, it was hard to keep track."<sup>59</sup>

As in the historical cases presented above, the idea of using fortification systems in Iraq is being discussed as a countermeasure without taking into consideration the strategic implication of such a suggestion, as in the following passage:

Fortifications can be an effective part of an offensive strategy in counter-insurgency and can increase the probability of success in friendly offensive operations especially when placed across enemy lines of communication (LOCs). Correctly placed, they contribute to success in the offensive by closing enemy lines of retreat, shortening the distance in time and space to enemy culminating points and lengthening time and distance to friendly culminating points by improving friendly resupply. Carefully sited fortifications can shape the battlefield for victory in irregular warfare.<sup>60</sup>

But as in the past, fortifications can be the object of enemy countermeasures and also create a false sense of security that can be quite counter-productive at the strategic level. As another American officer asserts:

It is critical that an offensive mindset is maintained; adopting a defensive posture to mitigate risk to COIN personnel is ultimately counter-productive. Field Manual (FM) 3-24 states, "If military forces remain in their compounds, they lose touch with the people, appear to be running scared, and cede the initiative to the insurgents." . . . While clearly it is important to protect the force against the effect of IEDs, more must be done to protect the force and the populace by preventing their emplacement in the first place.<sup>61</sup>

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Whether the American forces in Iraq have found the right operational balance for the Iraqi conflict is difficult to assess. What is clear, however, is that ambushes and IEDs continue to undermine the political will to fight. The strategic countermeasures pressuring Iran to discontinue its support for the insurgents, particularly the help provided in designing and constructing new types of IEDs, are a step in the right direction. However, once again the counterinsurgents are facing a situation in which time is running out to effectively implement a strategic solution to the challenges created by ambushes and IEDs on the political home front.

## Conclusion

Again, there should be absolutely no doubt that armed forces must prioritize force protection in counter-insurgency and work tirelessly at finding countermeasures to ambushes and IEDs. However, given that ambushes and IEDs are the bread and butter of insurgents, it is very unlikely that they will stop seeking new tactics to use against the foreign counterinsurgents. History shows how insurgents have been creative and imaginative in developing new ways of attacking their enemies. As in the past, it is a dangerous illusion to think that a “silver bullet” can be found against ambushes and IEDs.

Ambushes and IEDs have been and continue to be the hallmark of insurgency warfare. The present conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq are no exceptions. Contrary to conventional forms of warfare, insurgency is not about defeating the enemy's armed forces. Rather, the goal is to demoralize the opponents' political leadership and undermine its public support. Ambushes and IEDs become preferred tactics when one has limited means and yet is pursuing goals that are essentially situated at the strategic level. In other words, they are the optimum solution for someone who wants to avoid fighting a militarily superior enemy, while actively engaging politically that same enemy who is relatively weak in political terms.

In this context, CF counter-IED activities need to be integrated into a genuine strategic plan that is much more than simply improving the public communications strategy. The Forces should be pushing to develop a true national strategy aimed at strengthening our national staying power. Our politicians might not be receptive to such a proposal, but it is certainly the best military advice that the CF can give them right now.

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## About the Author...

Eric Ouellet has a B.A and M.A. in political science from Université Laval, Quebec City, and a Ph.D. in organizational sociology from York University, Toronto. He works presently as a Defence Scientist with Defence Research & Development Canada at the Centre for Operational Research and Analysis in Ottawa. He has published on military leadership and command, and he is now doing research on the organizational challenges of counter-insurgency. He was previously professor at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto, and with the Department of Defence Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada. He served as reservist with the Voltigeurs de Québec in the 1980s.

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## Endnotes

1. Callwell. *Small Wars*, p. 125.
2. See Chivers, C.J. “Dutch Soldiers Stress Restraint in Afghanistan.” *New York Times* (6 April 2007), Internet version, consulted on 11 September 2007, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/06/world/asia>.
3. For interesting analyses of these conflicts please refer to Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War*; Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*; Harrison, *The Endless War*; Hunt, *Pacification*; Kinnard, *The War Managers*; Nagl, *Eating Soup with a Knife*; Moyer, *Triumph Forsaken*; Thompson, *No Exit from Vietnam*.
4. Beckett. *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies*, p. vii.
5. From older historiographies like the one proposed by De la Gorce in *La conquête de l'Algérie* to recent and critical ones

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proposed by researchers like La Cour Grandmaison in *Coloniser. Exterminer*, there are no substantial discrepancies on the origins of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Algerian campaign.

6. De la Gorce. *La conquête de l'Algérie*, p. 94.

7. See on Internet [www.quid.fr/2007/Defense\\_Nationale/Guerres\\_Francaises/1](http://www.quid.fr/2007/Defense_Nationale/Guerres_Francaises/1), consulted 16 November 2007.

8. Compilation from Nicot and Carré. *Algérie: Inventaire de la sous-série 1H*.

9. "Voilà, mon général, quelle a été l'affaire du 13 mars qu'on fera passer pour une victoire et où, cependant, nous avons été forcés d'abandonner le champ de bataille avec une perte de 300 hommes . . . ." In Beaulaincourt-Marle, "Lettre du capitaine Brayer." *Campagnes d'Afrique*, pp. 188-189.

10. MacMahon. *Mémoires*, p. 151.

11. "Lettre du lieutenant-colonel Canrobert" in Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 452.

12. For instance, in a 17 November 1845 letter, Lieutenant-Colonel Canrobert wrote, "Les Arabes suivant la tactique de leur chef Abd-el-Kader, n'attaquent plus les colonnes un peu fortes, ils les harcèlent de loin, leur cause des fatigues inouïes, les forces à se diviser et se ruent sur les petits détachements." In Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 441.

13. A February 1841 letter by Chef de Bataillon De Lioux reads: "Je ne crois pas que ce soit en Algérie que l'on apprenne l'art de la guerre ; c'est une partie de chasse sur une grande échelle, où les régiments viennent s'user, se fondre en peu de temps ; trois mois après leur arrivée, ils ne savent plus s'aligner, tout ce qu'on a appris s'en va bientôt . . . ." In Sophie Beaulaincourt-Marles, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 221.

14. See De la Gorce. *La conquête de l'Algérie*, p. 89. Bugeaud actually closed almost two-thirds of French forward posts in 1841, see Rousset. *La conquête de l'Algérie*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

15. Yusuf. *De la guerre en Afrique*, p. 7-8.

16. Tocqueville. "Travail sur l'Algérie" and "Rapport sur l'Algérie (1847)," in *Œuvres complètes*.

17. In the words of Colonel Dubern in a March 1846 letter, "Les chevaux, les bœufs et même les moutons vont manquer totalement: la guerre a détruit les premiers et entravé leur reproduction ; les razzas alternatives des Arabes et les nôtres ont achevé l'extinction de la race bovine, déjà commencée par la consommation imprudente des veaux et des vaches ; il en a été de même pour les moutons. Au résumé, nous détruisons le pays que nous prétendons coloniser et civiliser." In Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 476.

18. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 166.

19. De la Gorce. *La conquête de l'Algérie*, p. 113.

20. Callwell. *Small Wars*, p. 86.

21. Alarmist letters from those days were common. For instance, in a letter from Henry Mallarmé of February 1846, one can read "C'est le plus grand désastre qu'ait éprouvé l'armée d'Afrique depuis vingt-cinq ans. [...] La position est grave, la guerre est devenue plus sérieuse que jamais. " In Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, pp. 464-465. Colonel Flô wrote in March 1846: "A aucune époque, depuis 1830, cet état n'a été moins rassurant, et il l'est devenu d'autant moins dans ces derniers temps qu'il n'est plus possible de prévoir désormais quelle sera l'issue de la crise." In Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 477. He later added, "les deux causes principales de cette impuissance tiennent à la dispersion extravagante de notre armée, divisée en une multitude de petites colonnes sans lien, sans force, manœuvrant au hasard . . . ." Ibid, p. 481.

22. For instance, a letter from a senior civil servant involved in Algeria in 1846 reads: "On a donné à M. Bugeaud cent mille hommes et cent millions [francs], deux ou trois fois plus qu'à ses prédécesseurs et, au bout de tout cela, il se trouve que notre cavalerie est détruite, notre infanterie exténuée, qu'aucun résultat n'est obtenu, que le désordre est partout dans la guerre, dans la politique, dans l'administration, et que le découragement s'empare de tous les esprits." In Beaulaincourt-Marle, *Campagnes d'Afrique*, p. 474.

23. Windrow. *The French Indochina War 1946-1954*, p. 11.

24. Kinnard. *The War Managers*, p. 16.

25. Devilliers. *Histoire du Vietnam de 1940 à 1952*, p. 371.

26. Fall. *The Street Without Joy*.

27. Speech given in Paris, 7 May 2004, by then French President Jacques Chirac on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the battle of Dien Bien Phu. On Internet at <http://www.elysee.fr>, consulted 23 October 2007.

28. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 49.

29. Irving. *The First Indochina War*, p. 118.

30. Fall. "The theory and practice of insurgency and counter-insurgency", p. 52.

31. Pierre Dallier wrote: "Mais le général de Lattre décidait aussi de couvrir le Delta tonkinois par un système fortifié essentiellement composé de blockhaus bétonnés, qui allaient immobiliser une vingtaine de bons bataillons opérationnels, de tirailleurs en particulier, qui manqueraient à nos forces mobiles." In *Le 4<sup>e</sup> R.T.M.*, p. 18.

32. Irving. *First Indochina War*, p. 93; Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 52.

33. Irving. *First Indochina War*, p. 81.

34. Thompson. *No Exit from Vietnam*, p. 77.

35. Harrison, James P. *The Endless War*. New York: Free Press, 1982, p. 126.

36. Irving. *First Indochina War*, p. 109.

37. Irving. *First Indochina War*, p. 119.

38. Irving. *First Indochina War*, p. 89.

39. Most sources used for this section are drawn from English language historical analyses to ease future reference for the reader. However, recent French sources are also used to update older analyses.


40. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, pp. 168-169.
41. According to Jean-Paul Mari, in an article in the *Nouvel Observateur* of 28 February 2002.
42. According to Jean-Paul Mari on Internet at <http://www.grands-reporters.com/Guerre-d-Algerie-Les-derniers.html>, consulted 23 October 2007.
43. Alexander and Keiger. "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, operations and diplomacy", p. 8.
44. In the unofficial history of the 4<sup>e</sup> Régiment de chasseurs, one can read that by 1960 even when the French Army ceased major operations, "Le Régiment s'adapte rapidement. Il prend un rythme de vie particulier: vivre la nuit. Car c'est à la faveur de l'obscurité que se manifestent les tentatives de l'adversaire: approche du réseau à dessein de le saboter ou d'installer des embuscades, essais de franchissement, et aussi harcèlement. Ces derniers ne seront jamais très dangereux, mais bazookas et mines nous causeront des pertes." On Internet at [http://www.4rch.fr/images/imagehistorique/\\_/historique\\_.htm](http://www.4rch.fr/images/imagehistorique/_/historique_.htm), consulted 21 November 2007.
45. Alexander and Keiger. "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, operations and diplomacy", p. 9.
46. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 181.
47. For more details see Guelton, Frederic. "The French Army's 'Centre for Instruction and Preparation in Counter-Guerrilla warfare' (CIPCG) at Arzew."
48. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 176-179.
49. Alexander and Keiger. "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, operations and diplomacy", p. 14.
50. Alexander and Keiger. "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, operations and diplomacy", p. 15.
51. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 171.
52. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 240.
53. Kelly. *Lost Soldiers*, p. 250.
54. Already in 1956, a quarter of the French population believed that Algeria would not remain French. Polls quoted in Merom, "The social origins of the French capitulation in Algeria", p. 615.
55. Merom. "The social origins of the French capitulation in Algeria", p. 618.
56. Callwell. *Small Wars*, p. 143.
57. Callwell. *Small Wars*, p. 127.
58. Blank. *Operational and Strategic Lessons of the War in Afghanistan*, 1979-90, p. 50.
59. Ghosh, Bobby and Mark Thompson. "The enemy's new tools." *Time* (25 June 2007), p. 26.
60. Demarest and Grau. "Maginot Line or Fort Apache," p. 35.
61. Church. "Assuring mobility in a COIN environment," pp. 22-23.



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# MANOEUVRE WARFARE THEORY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY DOCTRINE

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With much of the Western world embroiled in counter-insurgency (COIN) campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT), a considerable debate on how to wage these wars is taking place within Western militaries, academia and governments. The intensity and urgency of this discussion are reflective of the general lack of preparedness within those militaries for this type of war, despite the prevalence of insurgencies during the Cold War.<sup>1</sup> Much of the intellectual and material preparation since the late 1980s had focussed on fighting high-tech, mid-intensity wars against opposing conventional armies and almost no attention was paid to preparing for what are often referred to as low-intensity conflicts. Operations Desert Storm in Iraq and Allied Force in Serbia only served to reinforce the belief among Western military professionals that future wars would be characterized by all-seeing sensors cueing precision weapons with almost no need for “boots on the ground” except as a constabulary force after the enemy had capitulated.

However, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have turned these predictions on their heads, with Western armies discovering that high-tech sensors and munitions are of much less use in COIN campaigns. This has resulted in a rushed effort to develop principles, techniques and theories for the conduct of COIN campaigns. Often, comparisons are made to past COIN efforts in Vietnam, Malaya, Algeria or Kenya in an attempt to glean long-forgotten, or even ignored, lessons from those wars.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, lower-level commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan have written about techniques and principles that were developed and refined in theatre, usually by trial and error. Both the US and Canada have recently produced draft COIN manuals based on the requirement to educate and train their armies in this rediscovered form of warfare that are based in large part on historical comparisons and experience from the field. This considerable effort, while necessary, may risk throwing the baby out with the bath water. Put another way: is it really necessary to start from scratch when developing COIN doctrine? Are insurgencies so vastly different from conventional wars that none of the principles or techniques from the latter could be applied to the former?

Since the 1980s, many Western armies have chosen to adopt ‘manoeuvre warfare’ as the basis for their doctrine. Although hardly a new concept, manoeuvre warfare was seen as an antidote to theories that emphasized attrition, and presented a more economical, dynamic approach to warfare akin to the German *blitzkrieg* of the Second World War. The key to manoeuvre warfare, as expressed by proponents like William Lind and Robert Leonhard, was the defeat of the enemy by attacking his critical vulnerability rather than going toe-to-toe with his strength. By the mid 1990s, most Western armies had converted to this school of thought, at least in their doctrine manuals, and were teaching their young officers the principles and techniques of this ‘new’ form of warfare. However, since only recently adopting this new theory, Western armies are faced with insurgencies rather than mid to high-intensity wars. Does this mean that manoeuvre warfare theory is no longer valid or applicable? This essay will attempt to answer this question by first defining manoeuvre warfare theory and COIN theory as they exist today, and then determining if the former is in any way applicable to the latter. The intent is to examine whether the campaigns of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) do necessitate starting from scratch with regards to doctrine.

Although manoeuvre warfare was adopted as the basis for much of the doctrine of Western armies, there remains some ambiguity and confusion as to what exactly it entails.<sup>3</sup> Many definitions exist and few sources are capable of succinctly and clearly defining what manoeuvre warfare is and how one does it. Two of the best works on modern manoeuvre warfare come from Leonhard and Lind. While both draw heavily on Sun Tzu, Richard Simpkin, Sir Basil Liddell-Hart and Second World War German theories, they synthesize these thoughts and produce what could be called the modern school of manoeuvre warfare.



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Lind's description of manoeuvre warfare theory is based largely on the research done by a USAF Colonel, John Boyd, who studied fighter aircraft dogfights in the Korean War. Col Boyd observed that fighter pilots who were able to observe their opponent, orient themselves to the situation, decide on a course of action and act upon that course of action faster than their opponents were usually victorious. The idea was that the pilot who went through his OODA loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act—also known as a Boyd Cycle) faster than his opponent was able to render his opponent's actions irrelevant and gain the upper hand in the dogfight. Lind applies this theory to land warfare and states that ground forces able to consistently decide, move and fight faster will quickly render an enemy's actions irrelevant and thereby destroy his cohesion. An enemy who finds that his actions are less relevant with each passing moment will likely "panic or become passive [and] [t]his is an ideal outcome for the victor, because a panicked or passive enemy can be annihilated or captured at the lowest cost in friendly casualties."<sup>4</sup>

Lind further argues that to affect manoeuvre warfare as he describes it requires decentralized command and control and the use of initiative at all levels of command. In order to act faster than the enemy, you cannot rely on slow, methodical planning; commanders must seize opportunities as they present themselves.<sup>5</sup> Mission-type orders that tell subordinates what to achieve and not how to achieve it; the designation of a main effort to focus friendly forces and promote unity of effort and reliance on reconnaissance to find gaps in enemy defences are all methods for speeding up the friendly force's ability to conduct Boyd Cycles. Therefore, the essence of Lind's theory



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is tempo—the ability of one force to act quicker than another and thereby gain an advantage.

Leonhard expands upon Lind's theory of manoeuvre warfare by looking beyond tempo to other methods of defeating an enemy. Similarly to Lind's, his theory is focussed on defeating an enemy with the minimal necessary amount of force. However, Leonhard explains in greater detail both why this is beneficial and how it can be achieved. To begin, he compares manoeuvre warfare to attrition theory, which emphasizes the physical destruction of the enemy. He explains how attrition is very costly in terms of personnel, materiel and time but, more importantly, how it is often the least effective method for defeating an enemy. Destruction and defeat are not synonymous, and practitioners of attrition theory tend to emphasize the physical aspects of war (loss exchange ratios, body counts) vice the psychological elements such as morale, willpower, cohesion and fear.<sup>6</sup> This in turn leads to a focus among attritionist commanders on colossal battles of strength versus strength where a maximum number of kills can be achieved.

As defined by Leonhard, manoeuvre warfare "attempts to defeat the enemy through means other than the simple destruction of his mass."<sup>7</sup> Although a straightforward definition, the 'other means' by which an enemy could be defeated necessitate an explanation. Leonhard emphasizes that pre-emption is the most economical and often most successful method for defeating an enemy. "Indeed the highest and purest application of maneuver theory is to *pre-empt* the enemy, that is, to disarm or neutralize him before the fight."<sup>8</sup> This is in consonance with Lind's emphasis on tempo and Boyd Cycles as being central to manoeuvre warfare. However, Leonhard does not stop there and goes on to describe other methods of defeating an enemy other than solely by the destruction of his mass.

The next most preferred method, after pre-emption, is dislocation, which Leonhard describes as "...removing the enemy from the decisive point, or vice versa, thus rendering them useless and irrelevant to the fight."<sup>9</sup> Dislocation is further classified as either positional or functional dislocation. Positional dislocation involves making the enemy's location irrelevant through manoeuvre—the US "left hook" manoeuvre in Operation Desert Storm being a key example of this method. By attacking far to the West of Kuwait, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army rendered the bulk of the Iraqi fixed defences irrelevant. Functional dislocation refers to rendering an enemy's strength irrelevant through tactics and technology and is best illustrated with the example of forcing enemy tanks to fight in close terrain, where they are most vulnerable and least able to bring their strengths to bear.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, Leonhard proposes disruption as the third method for defeating the enemy more economically. He defines disruption as attacking the enemy's centre of gravity, or his critical vulnerability, thereby causing the enemy to lose cohesion and the will to fight. Disruption is closely linked to battlefield psychology and its target is not the enemy forces per se but rather the mind of the opposing commander and the morale of his soldiers.<sup>11</sup> Attacks on command and control nodes, logistics and transportation hubs and even seats of political power are examples of disruption, provided they represent an enemy's critical vulnerability.

Leonhard's work remains one of the most comprehensive and understandable descriptions of modern manoeuvre warfare theory. Although not without its detractors,<sup>12</sup> manoeuvre warfare was adopted as the doctrinal basis for the US Army, US Marine Corps, Canadian Army and most other NATO countries; indicating that it was considered to be more than just a passing fad or revisionist interpretation of Second World War German tactics. However, manoeuvre warfare was adopted as a means of defeating the massed Soviet Tank Armies arrayed across the Inter German Border without having to



engage in a pure attrition slugging match. It was seen as a doctrine that could compensate for the imbalance of strength in Central Europe and give NATO a chance at victory in a purely conventional fight.<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, the principles and methods described by Lind, Leonhard and others predate mechanized warfare and indeed most authors use pre-Second World War historical examples to some extent to illustrate the applicability of manoeuvre warfare. Examples of ‘manoeuvrist’ solutions to tactical problems in ancient Greece, Rome, Macedonia and China are as numerous as modern examples from Germany, the Soviet Union and Iraq.<sup>14</sup> This then begs the question: is manoeuvre warfare solely applicable to conventional conflicts typified by massed formations of armoured vehicles? Or, are the principles and methods equally applicable to a counter-insurgency campaign such as those faced by the West in Iraq and Afghanistan? In order to answer that question it is necessary to first discuss current COIN theories, principles and methods.

Much of the current thought on COIN doctrine is either in draft form (see below) or is being developed from the ground up by junior leaders with recent experience in Iraq or Afghanistan. Also, academia has joined the effort by examining COIN campaigns in the recent past in an effort to gain insight into how current campaigns might be conducted. From these sources, many principles and methods have been proposed and these in turn have formed the basis for much of the nascent COIN doctrine. Dr. David Kilcullen’s “Twenty-Eight Articles” is perhaps one of the most well known articles proposing tactical-level COIN principles and methods. As its title suggests, the article puts forward 28 tips for company-level commanders regarding how to prepare themselves prior to, and command their sub-units during, a COIN campaign. A synopsis of some of Kilcullen’s key articles is shown in Table 1.

ARTICLE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION
1	Know Your Turf	Know the topography, economy, history, religion and culture of your area.
2	Diagnose the Problem	Who are the insurgents, what drives them? Know your enemy.
3	Organize for Intelligence	Establish a Company Intelligence Cell.
4	Organize for Inter-Agency Operations	Train in inter-agency operations and dealing with civilians.
6	Find a Political/Cultural Advisor	Use someone within your organization with people skills and cultural awareness.
7	Train the Squad Leaders—Then Trust Them	Skilled lower-level commanders are key in COIN. Train them to act intelligently and independently.
10	Be There	Boots on the ground is key in COIN. Establish a presence and maintain it.
13	Build Trusted Networks	Win ‘hearts and minds’ through engagement of leaders and key actors.
23	Practice Armed Civil Affairs	“Counter-insurgency is armed social work; an attempt to redress basic social and political problems while being shot at.”
25	Fight the Enemy Strategy, Not His Forces	Don’t fight the enemy unless it is on your terms and benefits your mission.
28	Whatever Else You Do, Keep the Initiative	Always make the enemy react to you.

Table 1: Excerpts from Kilcullen’s “Twenty-Eight Articles”<sup>15</sup>

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In *Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes of Counter-insurgency* by Eliot Cohen et al., many of the prescriptions made by Kilcullen are echoed, although broader principles are proposed. Of note is the principle of “isolating insurgents from their cause and support” wherein they argue that “Cutting an insurgency off to die on the vine is easier than it is to kill every insurgent.”<sup>16</sup> Some methods offered for achieving this aim include redressing grievances that caused the insurgency, sealing borders and population control through biometric ID cards.<sup>17</sup> The principles of “legitimacy as the main effort” and “security under the rule of law” serve to reinforce the isolation of insurgents by redressing common complaints that often fuel insurgency: corrupt governments and injustice or insecurity.<sup>18</sup>

Many other authors, in studying past COIN campaigns view the isolation of insurgents from their moral and material support as a key method of defeating an insurgency. Often repeated is the British approach in Malaya where the use of resettlement of the population, food control and national ID cards effectively cut off the Communist insurgents from the majority of their support.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the French practice in Algeria of sealing the border and thereby preventing insurgents from gaining access to safe base areas is another common example. The Morice Line, a 320 km long fence along the border with Tunisia “...completely stopped insurgent infiltration.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, instances of limited success by US forces in Vietnam, such as the Special Forces Civilian Irregular Defence Groups (CIDG) or the US Marine Corps’ Combined Action Program (CAP), are presented by some authors as highly effective techniques for combating an insurgency. In both cases, limited numbers of US soldiers and marines trained, lived and fought with much larger numbers of local indigenous forces. As Robert M. Cassidy explains, one lesson drawn from the CIDG and CAP experiences was that: “A modest investment of US forces at the village level can yield major improvements in local security and intelligence.”<sup>21</sup>

The recently released US joint manual *FM 3-24 Counter-insurgency* is based to a large extent on the lessons learned from past COIN campaigns as well as the experiences of the US Army and US Marine Corps in Iraq and Afghanistan. Indeed Annex A of the manual is based almost entirely on Kilcullen’s “Twenty-Eight Articles” with only minor modifications. While much of the manual is focused on COIN campaign design or intelligence considerations, there are some sections that deal with tactical-level counter-insurgency tactics, techniques and procedures. The principal method proposed is that of “Clear-Hold-Build” whereby a force first clears a geographic area by destroying, capturing, or forcing the retreat of insurgents within that area. FM 3-24 places an emphasis on the destruction or ‘elimination’ of insurgents in the first phase of this method, and even recounts the battle of Tal Afar, Iraq in the summer of 2005 where “...hundreds of insurgents were killed or captured...” as part of the clearance of that town.<sup>22</sup> The manual also briefly mentions the physical isolation of insurgents through such means as interdicting their lines of supply or attacking their base areas, although this theme is not expanded upon. On the other hand, during the ‘Clear’ phase, commanders are encouraged to provide security for the populace, assist with the re-establishment of legitimate government, and support development and reconstruction, thereby winning the populace over and morally isolating the insurgents.<sup>23</sup>

The “Hold” is accomplished both through physical security of the population and infrastructure of the cleared area, and through the creation and maintenance of popular support for the COIN force and the host-nation government. Host-nation security forces have a large role to play in both of these objectives and FM 3-24 pays considerable attention to the development and employment of local forces. In addition to reinforcing US and coalition soldiers, host-nation security forces potentially offer a considerable intelligence-gathering capability while also demonstrating the government’s capacity and

legitimacy. Other aspects of the “Hold” phase include the continued efforts to gain popular support, mostly through development work and provision of security, and assistance to the host-nation government. The aim of this phase is to build on the success of the “Clear” phase and to ensure the insurgents are cut off from the population and are not able to re-establish themselves.<sup>24</sup>



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Finally, during the “Build” phase, the focus shifts to the creation of functioning organs of the legitimate government. This is intended to further foster and solidify support for the government while undermining support for the insurgents. Security forces would continue to conduct operations to provide security for the population although other methods such as population control (census, identification cards, movement restrictions) would begin to play a larger role. FM 3-24 also identifies “Combined Action” as a technique “...to hold and build while providing a persistent counter-insurgent presence among the populace.”<sup>25</sup> This entails embedding US forces directly into a host-nation unit, in much the same manner as the US Marine Corps’ Vietnam-era CAP, as a means of integrating with local forces, gaining intelligence and providing greater security to the populace.

FM 3-24 incorporates tactics and techniques from both current and past COIN campaigns and uses contemporary (Afghanistan, Iraq) and historical (Vietnam) illustrations to demonstrate their application. Many of the “best practices” identified by soldiers and historians are included such as: population control measures; insurgent supply line interdiction; host-nation force recruiting and development; improving host-nation governance; and, the need for popular support. However, what the new manual does not include is any reference whatsoever to preceding US Army or US Marine Corps manoeuvrist doctrine. None of the tactical-level principles, fundamentals or techniques of previous doctrine is carried over into the new COIN doctrine.

The draft Canadian COIN manual, on the other hand, embraces manoeuvre warfare doctrine and applies many of its elements to the problem of fighting an insurgency. While building on recent lessons and academic study, much as the US manual did, the

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Canadian draft placed a significant emphasis on attacking the insurgents' will through pre-emption, dislocation and disruption.<sup>26</sup> The manual refers to seizing opportunities in a COIN environment through such means as pro-active intelligence and surveillance which could cue quick reaction forces or special operating forces. Pre-emption would have the effect of surprising and destabilizing insurgents while also denying them the opportunity to act effectively.<sup>27</sup> Dislocation is aimed at removing popular support for the insurgents and preventing them from bringing their strength to bear. The manual suggests this can be accomplished through deterrence, vital point security, and information operations efforts that sway locals' support towards the host-nation government.<sup>28</sup> Attacking the insurgents' critical assets and impeding their mobility and re-supply are the main suggested methods for achieving disruption in a COIN campaign.<sup>29</sup> The use of pre-emption, dislocation, and disruption to attack an enemy's physical and moral cohesion are hardly new concepts and would seem familiar to soldiers in modern western armies.

In other words, the Canadian approach draws from previous manoeuvrist doctrine and makes use of many of the same principles and methods. Much within the Canadian COIN doctrine is very similar to that in previous Army manuals such as *Land Force Tactical Doctrine* that states "...the defeat of an enemy need not always mean physical destruction."<sup>30</sup> This statement is echoed closely in the draft of *Counter-insurgency*:

Even at the tactical level a manoeuvrist approach to a COIN operation will seek to shatter enemy moral and physical cohesion, rather than pursue his wholesale destruction.<sup>31</sup>

Evidently, the Canadian Army decided to evolve and adapt its standing doctrine to meet the needs of COIN operations rather than going back to the drawing board and drafting an entirely new and unrelated set of principles and fundamentals. This again raises the fundamental question of this essay: is manoeuvre warfare applicable to COIN operations or is the Canadian Army merely trying to shoehorn old ideas into a new paradigm? Alternately, is the US approach, with its doctrinal and terminological distance from extant theories, more realistic?

To answer this question it is necessary to analyze COIN through a manoeuvrist lens and see if the basic tenets of the latter are valid in the context of the former. As stated above, the central theme of manoeuvre warfare is the attack on the enemy's critical vulnerability, his centre of gravity, rather than on his mass or strength. For this key aspect of manoeuvre warfare to be applicable in COIN operations it would be necessary for the insurgents to possess an identifiable and assailable centre of gravity. Common sense tells us that all opponents have critical vulnerabilities, and history show us that they can be attacked. For instance, an insurgency's leadership, supply base or lines of communication may represent its centre of gravity and past successful COIN operations have attempted to attack these rather than destroy the main insurgent fighting forces. The aforementioned example of the Morice Line in Algeria is but one case of a COIN force attacking an opponent's critical vulnerability (his lines of communication) vice confronting his strength.

Equally, contemporary manoeuvre warfare theory espouses pre-emption, dislocation and disruption as the methods by which an enemy can be defeated without reliance solely on destruction. As discussed earlier, the first of those methods (pre-emption), deals with seizing fleeting opportunities, upsetting the enemy's timetables, and thereby inducing panic or even paralysis. As we have seen above, there are examples of pre-emption in past and even current COIN campaigns. Kilcullen's 28th Article ("Whatever else you do, keep the initiative") is an exhortation to seize opportunities and force the enemy to become more reactive and his plans less relevant. While easily said,

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gaining the initiative is not always so easily done, as governments are often unwilling or unable to act decisively in the early stages of insurgency when the insurgent forces are weak and their plans still in development.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, at the tactical level, pre-empting an insurgent force that has intimate knowledge of the countryside and urban areas and that operates clandestinely amongst the population is a daunting task. However, there are examples of pre-emption in COIN warfare; one being the defeat of the Huks in the 1950s in the Philippines. In that case, the Philippine Secretary of National Defence, Magsaysay, deployed the army early on to hunt down and destroy the Huk insurgents while also addressing many of the grievances held by the populace the Huks were purportedly fighting for. This approach had the Huks on the defensive almost immediately and quickly made their plans for a popular uprising untenable and irrelevant<sup>33</sup>—in other words they were pre-empted.

Examples of dislocation in COIN abound although they are seldom referred to as such. The most obvious example of this method is population control, whereby a COIN force attempts to cut insurgents from their base of support by either winning the locals over to the government side, tightly controlling the activities of the populace, or removing civilians from the contested area altogether. In each case the aim is to either “remove the enemy from the decisive point or vice versa” as Leonhard would say. The population constitutes the decisive point, as insurgencies are essentially wars for control of the population and insurgent forces can be removed from that point (or vice versa) either physically or morally. Physical removal is accomplished through forced evacuations of contested areas, concentration of civilians in fortified villages or strict controls on civilian movement. Variations on these techniques were used to good effect by the British in Malaya during the 1950s and, as Wade Markel explains: “Denied effective access to supporters and supplies, the insurgency melted away.”<sup>34</sup>

Modern COIN campaigns have tended away from physical dislocation and instead place a greater emphasis on the moral separation of the insurgent from the populace. Strategies that focus on gaining popular support for the legitimate host government are ultimately intended to wrest control of the decisive point. By reinforcing, or even creating a government in a host-nation, COIN forces are often attempting to redress grievances amongst the population or demonstrate the legitimacy of said government. Bringing lawful, representative governance, providing security, and offering economic development aid are all methods by which a COIN force attempts to win over a population and deny access to the insurgents. In describing the British practice of improving infrastructure, security, and medical care for squatters in the Malayan campaign of the 1950s, Markel states: “These small but significant steps eliminated many of the grievances which had animated the squatters, thereby depriving the insurgents of considerable support.”<sup>35</sup> This is an example of moral dislocation of an insurgent force and, combined with the physical dislocation mentioned above; it allowed the British to ultimately defeat the Communists. Today in Afghanistan and Iraq, much of the COIN effort is focused on morally dislocating the enemy with particular emphasis on developing legitimate governance structures that offer a viable alternative to that of the insurgents and economic development to redress grievances. In essence, this is the aim behind the “Build” phase of the “Clear-Hold-Build” method advocated in US manual FM 3-24.

Finally, disrupting, or attacking the critical vulnerability, of an insurgent force is also evident in past and contemporary COIN campaigns. As was mentioned above, insurgent forces must intuitively all possess a critical vulnerability be it their leadership, supply lines, safe haven or external political support. While some of these critical vulnerabilities are difficult to hit, others have been successfully targeted by COIN forces, often with great success. In addition to the aforementioned case of the French cutting off access



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to safe havens with the Morice Line in Algeria, there are also more recent examples including NATO's attempts to target the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> In each case, the COIN force was attempting to destroy the enemy's cohesion and will to fight rather than engage in a costly effort to destroy the insurgents themselves.

Taken together, the paragraphs above show that manoeuvre warfare theory is applicable to COIN campaigns and that the fundamental principals and methods that make up that theory are not only limited to high-intensity, mechanized warfare. Examples of the application of these principals and methods in the fight against insurgencies abound throughout history, even if the practitioners themselves would not have described their tactics as 'manoeuvrist'. Nonetheless, instances of pre-emption, dislocation, and disruption can be found and are often associated with the more successful COIN campaigns.

Therefore, to answer the question posed at the introduction to this essay: manoeuvre warfare is applicable to COIN. Much of what was developed by Western armies in the 1980s and 1990s in terms of manoeuvre warfare doctrine can be of use in the insurgencies now faced by the West in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is not necessary to return to the drawing board to develop a COIN doctrine from scratch with no links to past doctrine; rather, it is only necessary to view the current wars through our pre-existing doctrinal lens. Of course there are clear differences between conventional and low-intensity wars such as the increased emphasis on political considerations; and the complexities of a battlefield where the contested feature is the will of the population rather than a piece of terrain. These differences may necessitate special training and knowledge in military forces but they are not so fundamental as to render the principles and methods of manoeuvre warfare irrelevant. Ultimately, a western army that starts from scratch in writing its COIN doctrine, ignoring manoeuvrist principles developed and taught to its officers, is indeed throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

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## About the Author ...

Maj Alex D. Haynes joined the CF in 1994 and graduated from Simon Fraser University in 1998 with a BA in History. An officer of The Royal Canadian Regiment, he served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion from 1998 to 2002 and is currently serving with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion as Officer Commanding Quebec Company. He deployed in 1998 on Op KINETIC in Kosovo as a Platoon Commander and more recently, in 2005, on Op ARGUS in Afghanistan as a Strategic Advisor. Maj Haynes is currently working on his MA in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada.

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# THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN AIRBORNE FORCES—PART 1

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Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew R. Jayne, CD

Modern airborne forces were borne in the aftermath of World War I as Russia and Germany abandoned the methods of warfare that had failed to gain them victory. Russia employed the first airborne troops in combat in 1927 and by 1939 the Germans had formed a full division. Western powers were slower to recognize the potential of airborne forces but German assaults at Eben Emael and Crete convinced the British and Americans of the utility of this new capability.

Canada developed an airborne capability in step with its allies but the reasons had more to do with 'politics' than military capability. Indeed, throughout the Canadian experience with airborne forces, there has always been a conflict between political expediency and military requirement. From the establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion for homeland defence through to the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1995, the lack of a clear role has invited political machinations that positively and negatively affect Canadian airborne forces. Today, only a small measure of airborne capability remains within the Canadian Forces but it appears as if new political motives and military lobbying are at play to renew Canadian airborne capability. The Conservative Government has promised to create a new parachute battalion of 650 troops with the necessary transport in Trenton, Ontario.

The historical question that has always been at the center of the debate over Canadian airborne forces remains relevant today: does Canada actually require an airborne capability? An exploration of the political motives, doctrinal foundations and military requirements of airborne forces throughout the Canadian experience will demonstrate that Canada has never required airborne forces. This hard truth sets the stage for the future that Canadian airborne forces might have within the context of the future security environment and the foreseeable political future. The future is not encouraging. Canada does not require an airborne capability, and creating one without a clear role is destined to repeat the fate of its predecessors and be unfair to the soldiers who would serve in it.

## Canada and Airborne Forces

Almost as long as men have fantasized of soaring through the skies with the gods and the birds, they have dreamed of being carried to adventure on flying carpets or of defeating their enemies from the sky. The heroic exploits of Bellerophon mounted on the winged horse Pegasus prophesized the tactical advantages that such mobility can provide.<sup>1</sup> This myth of Pegasus and the aspirations of man continued to drive innovation throughout history. The advent of ballooning in the 1700s inspired Benjamin Franklin to envision balloons as a means of dropping troops in enemy territory, but the dreams of men would have to wait until modern technology could be applied to the problem.

Modern airborne forces were borne in the aftermath of World War I. Russia and Germany had been defeated, and in these countries new ideas encountered less resistance as the traditional methods of warfare that had failed to gain them victory were abandoned. Russia employed the first airborne troops in combat in 1927 while fighting an insurgency in Central Asia. The Germans saw potential in this new capability and learned much from the Russian experiments. By 1939, Germany had formed a full

airborne division. Western powers were slower to recognize the potential of airborne forces but two actions would play a large role in changing western perceptions. On May 10, 1940 a small German force quickly captured a critical feature of the Belgian defences at Eben Emael<sup>2</sup>, opening the way for the German advance into Belgium. Then, one year later, the German seizure of Crete by airborne forces convinced the British and Americans of the utility of this new capability, precipitating a massive development of western airborne forces.<sup>3</sup>



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Canada developed an airborne capability in step with its allies but the reasons had more to do with politics than military capability. Indeed, throughout the Canadian experience with airborne forces, there has always been a conflict between political expediency and military requirement. As the former paratrooper Professor Bernd Horn described it:

The Canadian attitude to airborne forces has always been schizophrenic and driven by political purpose rather than by doctrine and operational necessity. The failure to properly identify a consistent and pervasive role for airborne forces led to a roller coaster existence, dependent on the personalities in power and political expedients of the day.<sup>4</sup>

Canada initially established the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Parachute Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn) for homeland defence and then sent it to fight with British airborne forces during The Second World War. Following the war, the Battalion was disbanded and only a small kernel of the capability remained in the Special Air Service (SAS) Company. This company evolved into the Mobile Striking Force (MSF) and then the Defence of Canada Force (DCF) before the Canadian Airborne Regiment (Cdn AB Regt) was established in the 1960s. The Cdn AB Regt was eventually disbanded for political reasons in 1995 following the tragic murder of a Somali prisoner. Today, only a small measure of parachute (as opposed to airborne<sup>5</sup>) capability remains scattered throughout the Canadian Forces. It now appears as if political motives and military lobbying are at play to renew Canadian airborne capability. The Conservative Government has promised to create a new airborne battalion of 650 troops with the necessary transport in Trenton, Ontario. Prime Minister Harper clearly stated during the election campaign that "The government of the day disbanded the Airborne Regiment to avoid getting to the bottom of a particular incident."<sup>6</sup>

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Political manoeuvring and military desire taken into account, the historical question at the center of the debate over Canadian airborne forces remains relevant today: Does Canada actually require an airborne capability? This paper will explore the political motives, doctrinal foundations and military requirements of airborne forces throughout the Canadian experience, from their beginnings in 1942 until the present. This analysis will set the stage for an examination of the role future Canadian airborne forces might have within the context of the future security environment and the foreseeable political future. In the end, however, the conclusion that Canada does not require an airborne capability is inescapable.

## **Background**

Before engaging in a discussion on airborne capability, it is first necessary to understand exactly what the modern term “airborne” implies. The most recent Canadian doctrine, published in 1990, defines an airborne operation as “... a joint operation involving the air movement of forces into an objective area. Troops and equipment may be delivered by parachute, by helicopter, or airdropped [sic].”<sup>7</sup> At the time, this definition seemed to be inclusive of airmobile operations and yet, despite this inclusiveness, a separate Canadian Forces publication exists for airmobile operations.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the current airborne operations manual only attempts to cover what it considers the most complex delivery method—a parachute drop.

More modern Canadian definitions clearly make a distinction between airborne and airmobile forces. Canadian Land Force Tactical Doctrine makes this distinction by stating that “... the term “airborne” refers to parachute or (fixed wing) air transported delivery as opposed to tactical (heliborne) mobility.”<sup>9</sup> This understanding of airborne is consistent with NATO and American definitions<sup>10</sup> and, therefore, will be used throughout this paper.

From an American perspective, airborne forces are elite<sup>11</sup> units that are specially trained and equipped to conduct ‘forced-entry’ or to lead assaults into enemy territory and then hold an area open until reinforcements arrive to continue operations.<sup>12</sup> This broad perspective translates into the ability of airborne forces to conduct a range of missions at the strategic, operational and tactical levels that American and Canadian doctrine both recognize. These missions fall into the general categories of seizing and holding operations, airborne interdiction operations and airborne raids.<sup>13</sup> These missions, and the capabilities inherent in air delivery, demonstrate the greatest strength of airborne forces—a capability to rapidly project strategic power over great distances.<sup>14</sup> In conjunction with this strength, Canada also recognizes that airborne forces have additional characteristics that separate them from conventional forces. These characteristics include flexibility, lightness and shock effect.<sup>15</sup>

The flexibility of airborne forces resides in their range of tactical employment. They can be used in widely varying terrain (urban, jungle, mountain) and can also be delivered by helicopter, vehicle or on foot (despite the previous definition of airborne). Their light equipment (in weight and quantity) make accurate intelligence and detailed planning key factors for success but this creates a spirit of resilience and adaptability focused on the soldier vice the equipment. The employment of airborne forces with audacity is risky; however, it can create a shock effect out of proportion to the size or capabilities of the force.

Airborne forces are not without their limitations which, placed in a modern Canadian context, are considerable. They require large numbers of transport aircraft for delivery and sustainment. Limited numbers of costly air transport resources and the need to protect them create the need to gain air superiority, at least for the insertion and





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sustainment air corridors, and to suppress enemy air defence assets. Airborne forces are susceptible to weather; high winds and low visibility can contribute to widely dispersed troops and high landing casualties. The risk of heavy losses from ground fire and enemy air defence systems means that extensive and accurate intelligence of the area of operations is vital to success. The ability to gain this type of intelligence requires considerable strategic resources and specialized capabilities to produce. Finally, special training and equipment are needed for airborne forces.<sup>16</sup>

The full range of enabling capabilities required to possess an airborne capability is vast and can be prohibitively expensive for most countries to acquire. Unfortunately, they are essential to overcome the inherent limitations discussed. As a result, many middle and major powers retain some sort of airborne force but it is only the U.S. 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division that retains the full range of capabilities to jump a divisional force into hostile territory.<sup>17</sup> American airborne doctrine describes the capabilities required in terms of the battlefield operating systems that must be considered. They are intelligence; manoeuvre; fire support; mobility, counter-mobility and survivability; air defence; combat service support; and command and control.<sup>18</sup>

Given the range of capabilities needed to successfully prosecute airborne operations and the costs associated with maintaining them, it is not surprising that only the U.S. maintains a complete airborne capability today. Instead of a full airborne capability like the U.S., most countries, including Canada, maintain certain portions of an airborne capability, the most basic being a parachute capability. A parachute capability is simply the ability to train soldiers to safely jump out of an aircraft as a means of transportation to an unopposed or relatively lightly opposed location.<sup>19</sup> The absence of a capable enemy removes the necessity for many of the enablers that are associated with an airborne capability such as intelligence, fire support, and air defence, as well as aspects of mobility, counter-mobility, survivability, and command and control. As a result, the cost of maintaining a parachute capability is considerably less than the cost of an airborne capability, but the range of employment is also similarly constrained.

Despite the seeming flexibility and utility of an airborne force, the numbers of situations in which they have been employed doctrinally have been decreasing dramatically.<sup>20</sup> The U.S. experience shows that airborne forces were inserted into operations by parachute only six times from the end of the Second World War until 2001.

These instances include Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama and Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup> This is a surprisingly small number considering that the U.S. was involved in six major engagements and employed force for political aims 219 times during that period.<sup>22</sup>

Even though airborne forces were employed in these conflicts they were not all under the same circumstances and it is necessary to place them in context. In Korea, the 187<sup>th</sup> Regimental Combat Team made two successful daylight drops against light opposition. They were able to secure their objectives relatively easily and link up with friendly forces.<sup>23</sup> In Vietnam, the nature of the battles and political limitations ruled out traditional massed airborne forces but there was at least one example. In 1967, 780 soldiers of the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and 100 tons of equipment and supplies were dropped in daylight against light opposition in advance of airmobile forces to target the supreme headquarters of the Viet Cong. Maj.-Gen. Tolson, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division at the time, summarized the role of airborne forces versus heliborne assault forces as follows:

Although parachute delivery of troops and equipment is a relatively inefficient means of introducing troops into combat, the very existence of this capability complicates the enemy's planning and offers the friendly commander one more option of surprise.<sup>24</sup>



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In October 1980, two Ranger battalions secured an airfield in Grenada for the 82nd Airborne Division to land and stabilize the situation. The Rangers encountered some resistance but overall the operation was a success.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in Panama in 1989, various battalion drops were conducted to seize strategic points in one of the largest and most sophisticated airborne and ground contingency operations in modern history. This operation required various conventional, special and joint force capabilities.<sup>26</sup> In all these instances the strategic airlift assets, air power and joint capabilities of the U.S. forces were necessary to execute the operation.

The US experience with airborne forces is important to understand because, as the pre-eminent military power on the planet, the trends that it sets and the capabilities that it develops or divests have and will continue to have a tremendous impact on Canada. It is clear from the examples given that airborne forces can provide viable options for political and military decision-makers, but it is also clear that the range of conventional, special and joint capabilities required to employ airborne forces successfully are costly and only available to a very small group of nations. It is also clear that the instances where these nations have decided to employ airborne forces have dramatically decreased since The Second World War.

Airborne advocates within the Canadian military have wanted, since the outset of The Second World War to belong to the airborne club. This desire has been hampered because the Canadian government and military leaders have continually been less than forthcoming with the defence policy or resources to justify building or maintaining an airborne capability. The struggle between these competing interests in Canada has resulted in very little success establishing or maintaining an airborne force. In fact, the lack of a convincing role for Canadian airborne forces has meant that any success achieved by military proponents of airborne forces was due to political expediency vice any real requirement for the capability. A historical analysis will demonstrate that this unfortunate reality has hampered the development and maintenance of airborne forces in Canada since the beginning of the Second World War and, as will be discussed later, this reality will continue to persist well into the future.

## **Early Canadian Airborne Capability**

As already mentioned, German airborne operations at the outset of the Second World War at Fort Eben Emael and Crete convinced the British and Americans that airborne forces were a viable method of warfare. The British started to develop a force after Winston Churchill strongly suggested the idea to the War Cabinet in June 1940. The Americans were also developing the capability throughout the later part of 1940 and 1941 as they studied the details of the operation in Crete. In Canada, as early as August 1940, Colonel E.L.M Burns was the first to suggest that Canada establish a unit of paratroopers. Colonel Burns was accustomed to thinking outside the box. As a captain in the Royal Canadian Engineers he had written an article in 1924 proposing that cavalry units be mounted on mechanized vehicles with machine guns, which was considered a preposterous idea at the time, to say the least.<sup>27</sup> His initial proposal for Canadian paratroops received a negative response. The Director of Military Operations in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ), Colonel J.C. Murchie, considered that the expenditure of time, money and equipment would have doubtful value for the war effort. Additionally, he reasoned that any Canadian parachute troops would be part of a British formation and therefore difficult to administer and largely out of Canadian control, an important issue for Canada during the Second World War.<sup>28</sup>

Canadian decision makers held the perception that there was no pervasive role for Canadian parachute troops. Burns continued his attempts to convince commanders using the arguments that paratrooper training would boost morale; that a mobile,

offensive capability would be required to take the offensive against Germany; and that paratroops were useful for homeland defence. These arguments however met with little success.<sup>29</sup>



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General McNaughton, the Canadian overseas commander, believed that creating specialized forces without a credible role was a waste of valuable resources that Canada could not afford. Despite the initial setbacks, the idea was taking root in Britain and the U.S., and consequently attracted attention in Canada. By early 1942, the Minister of National Defence (MND) was advocating training paratroopers but not forming a unit, and the Director of Military Training was investigating training in the U.S. and gathering information about the 6<sup>th</sup> British Airborne Division (6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div). Finally, a proposal tabled to the MND in June 1942 for the formation of a parachute battalion was approved by the Cabinet War Committee on 1 July 1942.<sup>30</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn was born with a stated role of home defence, to provide a means of recapturing airports or reinforcing remote locations by airborne troops. This role, however, was never fulfilled by the newly formed unit. The unit sought aggressive recruits who were required to join the Canadian Active Service Force (enabling them to serve overseas) before they could join 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn. There was thus no doubt from the outset that these soldiers were being prepared to fight overseas. Before the unit had been fully trained it was offered to the British and alerted for overseas duty.<sup>31</sup> The inconsistency between the publicly stated role of Canadian parachute troops and the eventual employment of the unit with the British provides the first example in a long history of inconsistent roles and conflicting military and political motives associated with airborne forces in Canada.

The real motive of the Canadian military supporters of parachute capability was to be part of British and American efforts to use modern airborne forces for large scale offensive actions in Europe. Opponents argued that paratroopers were not required for homeland defence; valuable resources should be used to further contributions to the war effort that could be nationally controlled. Professor Horn described this inconsistency as follows:

[T]he ultimate aim was never to develop the airborne capability for use in the country's defence. That was merely a sop to sidetrack opponents and gain supporters. The advocates wanted to use the paratroops in the active theatres of Europe. Indeed, airborne forces had become a symbol of modern warfare.<sup>32</sup>

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Canadian airborne supporters wanted to become part of the group of nations that possessed this modern fighting capability, and although they used a questionable rationale to achieve that goal the results were impressive. The recruiting standards and physical demands of the training ensured that the paratroopers were the best conditioned troops in the Canadian Army.<sup>33</sup> In late July 1943 the 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn was heading for England to join the 6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div and the war.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn was assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parachute Brigade of the 6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade was unique as it was the only mixed brigade of Canadian and British troops during the war due to the Canadian desire to retain command of national troops.<sup>34</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn continued training in England for ten months before moving to their assigned transit camp for the Normandy invasion. In late May 1944 they had little idea of the impact that they were about to make on the war, and the impact that their heroic service and proud legacy would have on maintaining a strong desire for an airborne capability in Canada.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div played an important role in the Normandy invasion, securing the left flank of SWORD Beach. During this, and subsequent actions, the 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn acquitted itself well but the cost was great. When they arrived back in England on 6 September 1944, 357 of the original 443 who jumped on D-Day had been either killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or listed as missing.<sup>35</sup> A period of reconstitution and training was then started to rebuild the Battalion and correct short-comings observed in Normandy. By the end of 1944 the Battalion was again ready to fight and filled with a sense of accomplishment and pride.<sup>36</sup>

The Battalion was looking forward to Christmas when three German Armies launched their counteroffensive in the Ardennes. The attack on 16 December was in danger of breaking through the Allied line and among the reinforcements ordered forward was the 6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div, including the 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn. As the only Canadian unit to fight in the 'Battle of the Bulge' they fought through towns and defended the line, enduring terrible winter conditions.<sup>37</sup> In late January 1945 the unit moved from the Ardennes to Holland. They dug in along the Maas River and conducted patrols and exchanged fire with the Germans throughout the month of February until they received word that they were returning to England to prepare for another parachute operation. They had less than a month to prepare for their role in the vanguard of the assault across the Rhine and into Germany.<sup>38</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn trained hard for Operation VARSITY—the airborne phase of the successful Rhine crossing that seized the Diersfordter Forest and several small bridges over the Issel River. This operation was a marked departure from the deep airborne insertions of D-Day and Operation MARKET-GARDEN. Instead of dropping troops well to the rear in advance of the crossing, a force over 21,000 strong was inserted on the enemy side of the Rhine within range of Allied artillery support. The crossing started at night with the airborne operation being conducted the next day.<sup>39</sup> This change in tactic produced remarkable success<sup>40</sup> but afterwards airborne troops in Europe were confined to the ground acting as line infantry.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn was no exception. Although they continued to fight in the dash to the Baltic, they were never to jump into action again. When victory in Europe was achieved, the Battalion returned to England and reverted to Canadian control. They left England on 5 June 1945 and were greeted in Halifax 16 days later by a personal message from Mackenzie King and presented the key to the city of Halifax.<sup>41</sup> With their exploits now famous, and as the first intact unit returned home from the war, they were greeted by wildly cheering crowds and tremendous accolades; however, the war was over. Canada was demobilizing, so as the men reported back from leave on 27 July



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1945 they lined up for discharge. The last Commanding Officer, Fraser Eadie, signed the papers to disband 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn on 30 September 1945, and then arranged for his own discharge.<sup>42</sup>

The uncertain birth of Canadian airborne troops led to a short but glorious existence that many described as 'lost' amidst the accounts of the triumphs of the 6<sup>th</sup> Brit AB Div.<sup>43</sup>

This existence, however, was not lost on the survivors and proponents of a Canadian airborne capability in the years that followed. Airborne operations reached their pinnacle in The Second World War, but even as they reached their peak they were already starting to decline. Airborne insertions were risky operations and the lessons learned from D-Day and MARKET-GARDEN forced changes during VARSITY that were designed to mitigate some of the risks. Following the war there were examples of smaller airborne operations but it was The Second World War that really defined what it meant to be an airborne soldier. It was this period that saw the only massive employment of airborne forces, and the heroic successes of airborne forces created a lasting image of soldiers who were the epitome of combat readiness, courage, and physical fitness. This image of paratroopers was defined during the crucible of war and it would continue to be a persistent icon for soldiers to strive to achieve.



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## The Fight to Stay Alive

Following The Second World War, Canadian defence policy was influenced by a number of factors. These factors included geography, economic constraints, government spending priorities, perceived threats and collective security arrangements.

These factors, combined with the Cold War, focussed Canadian defence planning on the defence of Canada on two fronts, North America and Europe.<sup>44</sup> The 1946 Canada/U.S. Basic Security Plan (BSP) required Canada to provide an airborne or air-transportable brigade group and its associated airlift to counter the threat of potential Soviet attacks in the North.<sup>45</sup> Despite this stated requirement, Canada struggled to regain an airborne capability following the disbandment of 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn.



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Immediately after the war, there was no public or political appetite for unnecessary military expenditures nor was there a threat to Canada that would require airborne troops. Therefore the post war army design did not include airborne forces.<sup>46</sup> Training had ceased at the Canadian Parachute Training Centre (CPTC) in Shilo by May 1945, but the school continued to recruit former members of 1<sup>st</sup> Cdn Para Bn and the First Special Service Force in order to retain wartime experience and to maintain close links with their American and British counterparts. This initiative coincided with an NDHQ study that recognized the postwar importance that the Americans and British were placing on air transportability. The study indicated that Canada could play a role in air transportability standardization and experimentation, especially in cold climates.<sup>47</sup> This, and the BSP, led to the establishment of the Joint Air School (JAS) on 15 April 1947 from the amalgamation of the CPTC and the Airborne Research and Development Centre. The JAS had a mandate to research air-portability, conduct user trials, conduct limited development, train volunteer paratroopers, and exercise glider pilots. This mandate, combined with the internal impetus to retain airborne skills, soon produced results with the establishment of a Canadian Special Air Service (SAS) Company.<sup>48</sup>

The Army proposed a role for the SAS Company that masked the true intentions for the unit. Its stated purpose was to perform research and development, demonstrations to assist training, airborne firefighting, search and rescue, and aid to the civil power.<sup>49</sup> As the SAS Company proposal worked through NDHQ, two more items were added to the unit's role: assistance in the event of a natural disaster, and provision of a nucleus for an expansion into parachute battalions. As soon as the unit was approved, in January 1948, the façade fell away and the priority of tasks was clearly oriented towards the expansion into airborne battalions as well as training, preserving and advancing SAS techniques from The Second World War.<sup>50</sup> The domestic tasks were grouped together into what today would be referred to as a "be prepared to..." task. Perhaps prophetically, the SAS Coy consisted of a platoon from each of the three Active Force infantry regiments.

By 1948, Americans and Canadians alike were getting concerned about the defence of the continent from Soviet attack and, as a result, the potential Soviet avenue of advance through northern Canada needed to be blocked.<sup>51</sup> There was increasing U.S. pressure on Canada to fulfil its commitments for continental defence, in accordance with the BSP, sparking a renewed emphasis on airborne forces. The political reluctance to expend scarce resources on this military capability still existed but the government was faced with the necessity to fulfil bilateral defence commitments and to maintain Canadian sovereignty in the North.<sup>52</sup> A plan was developed and adopted by the military in the summer of 1948 to sequentially convert the bulk of the Army into the Mobile Striking Force (MSF). The MSF was to consist of a headquarters, the three existing regular infantry battalions, an engineer squadron and some service support elements capable of rapidly deploying to Canada's North to carry out the defence role stated in the BSP.<sup>53</sup>

The conversion to the MSF was problematic and it never did reach its intended end state or function. The force was created as a politically expedient method of meeting bilateral defence commitments without any changes to the wider view that military or political leaders held of airborne forces.<sup>54</sup> Canadian defence obligations can be very expensive and, as Colin Gray concluded, "Strategic theoretical rationales and policy declaration mean nothing if suitable men and machines are not available, trained and in working order."<sup>55</sup>

Firstly, the MSF was never provided with sufficient airlift assets to accomplish its role. The entire RCAF fleet of 30 Dakota aircraft and 8 Hadrian gliders were available to lift most of one battalion, but planners relied on the RCAF North Star aircraft to provide the remaining lift. Theoretically, sufficient North Stars could be available within one

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month after a conflict started but these aircraft were limited in number and heavily tasked.<sup>56</sup>

Secondly, the MSF was never fully trained and equipped. The initial battalion-sized test of the MSF, Exercise EAGLE, was unsuccessful. The airborne force was to seize an airport and support the landing of the main force. The drop went poorly and air superiority was not maintained. This dealt a serious blow to the credibility of the force. Another exercise was conducted successfully to prove the concept but international events were about to change Canadian defence policy and any existing commitment to support, train, and equip the MSF was about to disappear.<sup>57</sup>

Support for the MSF concept became more difficult in the early to mid-1950s as the threat to Canada's North started to evolve. The Soviet development of long range jet bombers capable of delivering nuclear payloads to North America posed a greater and more immediate threat than Soviet airborne incursions. By 1957, the successful Soviet test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) essentially removed the threat of a northern flank attack.<sup>58</sup> As well, Canada became involved with the United Nations action in Korea and with the NATO defence of Europe during the early 1950s. Both these commitments provided a new focus for political and military leaders.

As the military expanded to provide troops for Korea and Europe, American and Canadian priorities in the North switched to joint air defence measures designed to counter incursions from the new Soviet bomber and ICBM threat.<sup>59</sup> The MSF had become a side issue as NATO and Korea placed greater pressures on available soldiers, equipment, and resources. Only one company from each battalion was ever jump qualified and tenuously maintained throughout the mid-1950s, a far cry from the brigade that was envisioned. The MSF did, however, fulfil its purpose as a politically expedient force of the day.<sup>60</sup> Canada maintained northern sovereignty while mollifying American concerns over northern defence with a minimal commitment of resources.

In January 1958, the MSF was reorganized and renamed the Defence of Canada Force (DCF). Pragmatically, this new organization closely resembled the reality of the airborne capability that remained by that time. It called for decentralized parachute companies within each of the infantry regiments with the mandate to respond to enemy lodgements in the North.<sup>61</sup> Over the next few years, the government and military focus on the European theatre and the United Nations continually hampered efforts to keep even this limited capability alive. The new focus for the Army was on the brigade group in Germany. In the late 1950s, Canada was increasing its armoured and artillery capabilities, and fielding modern equipment. For the officers and men of the Army, this was playing with the 'big boys'.<sup>62</sup> The defence of the North continued, as Professor Horn described, to be both a boon and a bane for airborne forces:

Paradoxically, arguments about the defence of the North not only ensured the airborne's survival, as ethereal as it was, but it also perpetuated their continued marginalization. The lack of a credible and pervasive role consistently supported by the military and political chain of command assured a tenuous existence for Canada's parachute troops.<sup>63</sup>

## **The Rebirth of a Capability**

Overall, the focus of the military on United Nations and NATO commitments overseas did not bode particularly well for the airborne in the 1950s, but this focus also played a role in the rebirth of the capability. The large defence budgets of the early 1960s and political concerns over poor military judgement and management practices set the military up as a target for spending review and change.<sup>64</sup> In 1963, a secret report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Defence Policy concluded that Canada needed an air-



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transportable brigade group, including a parachute element, to counter small lodgements on Canadian territory. It went on to explore the possibility of earmarking these forces as part of 'Mobile Forces' designated for use by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). The report also concluded that Canada would be able to withdraw troops from Europe and maintain its NATO commitments if an air-transportable brigade were available in Canada. Although recommended as a long-term goal only, the report stated that Canada could best contribute to NATO with a strategically mobile force.<sup>65</sup> Political expediency was again set to play a role in Canadian airborne capability.

The 1964 White Paper echoed many of the themes and conclusions from the 1963 report. The White Paper proposed to make more effective use of manpower by gradually converting a brigade into a special service force that was smaller, with air-portable and air-droppable equipment.<sup>66</sup> The MND, Paul Hellyer,

wanted the Canadian military to be restructured into a globally mobile force that was capable of deterring war by rapidly responding to a wide range of situations.<sup>67</sup> This proposal attempted to rationalize defence commitments with the minimum number of forces and therefore, costs. This proposal had the benefit of appealing to a large number of people while minimizing the costs of defence commitments. Globally deployable troops could fulfill alliance tasks and be available to defend Canadian sovereignty. An Army analysis of defence commitments included requirements for heavy forces (armoured and mechanized) for NATO in Europe and light forces (airborne/air-transportable) for the defence of Canada, peacekeeping, the SACEUR Mobile Force, and small limited wars.<sup>68</sup>

The formation of an airborne capability in Canada was again more a function of political expediency than the existence of a clear and defined role, and if any political dissension or concern over the formation of airborne forces existed at the time, it was overshadowed by the issues of unification of the services.<sup>69</sup> The stage had been set for a rebirth of a Canadian airborne capability and, in December 1966, Hellyer stated that "... [Force Mobile] Command is also forming the Canadian Airborne Regiment whose personnel and equipment can be rapidly sent to danger zones."<sup>70</sup>

## The Canadian Airborne Regiment—The Initial Uncertainty

The rebirth, life and dramatic demise of Canadian airborne capability in the form of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (Cdn AB Regt) were marked by three things—uncertainty, anticipation, and political influence. Firstly, there was uncertainty over the role that the formation<sup>71</sup> was to fulfil in Canadian defence policy from its establishment in 1968 until its disbandment 27 years later. Secondly, there was anticipation by the Regiment's members that they would be required to fulfil a role they interpreted as their own. Thirdly, political expediency influenced many aspects of the Regiment's existence from its establishment and operational deployment through to its disbandment. This section will examine the life of the Cdn AB Regt to determine what role it played within the Canadian military and national defence policy, and whether or not this role was justified.

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Even prior to the Regiment's establishment some senior leaders in Mobile Command were not convinced that an airborne capability was required to fill a Canadian military role. While this could be attributed to a natural aversion to change,<sup>72</sup> it has also been argued that the concept was not well thought out. Dr. Bercuson, a well respected expert on politics, defence policy, and military history, believes that:

There was and is a real argument that although a modern, all-round military ought to retain some airborne capability, a unit such as the Canadian Airborne Regiment was operationally obsolete from the day it was formed.<sup>73</sup>

Paul Hellyer and General Allard, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), believed that their ideas for a strategic response capability in the form of the Cdn AB Regt were innovative but, in fact, the U.S. had been developing these ideas throughout the 1950s.<sup>74</sup>

The problem with this misconception was unfortunately more than simple hubris; it led Canada to create a capability that had been overcome by the advent and perfection of the helicopter. Helicopters allowed troops to be more quickly, effectively and accurately delivered to a landing zone with more supplies and equipment than a parachute drop. Helicopters were vulnerable to ground fire approaching the target but the same was true for parachute drops at 300 to 500 meters. Finally, helicopters were also capable of evacuating wounded and providing close fire support to troops on the ground.<sup>75</sup>

So, at a time when airborne forces were becoming obsolete and pressures existed to reduce defence spending, the question remains—Did Canada create the Cdn AB Regt to fulfil a perceived role, or were other factors at play? The answer is, quite simply, that other factors *were* at play, and these factors were to lay the foundation for much of the uncertainty, anticipation and political influence that was to occur throughout the existence of the Cdn AB Regt. Dr. Bercuson has described five factors that influenced the creation of the Cdn AB Regt: low morale, the Army's fixation on parachuting, the belief that paratroopers were the essence of combat-ready soldiers, the perceived need for some sort of anti-terrorist or anti-guerrilla force and, finally, cost.

The first factor—low morale—was a result of organizational changes to the Canadian Forces due to plans Paul Hellyer was introducing that struck units from the order of battle and reduced available resources. The next two factors are certainly understandable given the Canadian experience with paratroopers during The Second World War. Military leaders thought that a parachute capability would improve morale and provide a core of combat-ready soldiers. The fourth factor was a function of Canadian military leaders wanting a force comparable to the Special Forces that the US and Britain were developing<sup>76</sup> in order to be part of the club. Cost was, however, the driving factor. Airborne forces were not cheap, especially when the cost of transport aircraft and their associated infrastructure were considered, but they were less expensive than an investment in helicopters dedicated to airmobile forces.<sup>77</sup> The airlift required by airborne forces could be used for multiple purposes when not dropping paratroopers, whereas helicopters dedicated to airmobile forces would serve a specific purpose. Therefore, Canada outwardly decided to create the Cdn AB Regt to provide a strategic response capability but, in reality, the decision was politically expedient as it satisfied the widest range of diverse requirements with the least possible cost.

The major problem arising from creating a politically expedient force is that the role it was to fulfil was not clearly defined at the outset. As a result, the first commander of this new formation, Colonel Rochester, was directed to develop an operating concept from guidance that was too general and far-reaching in nature. This guidance, issued by the Army Commander, directed that the Regiment conduct tasks ranging from the defence of Canada, peacekeeping, and disaster relief to special forces missions and *coup de main* in general war. As a result, the operational concept encompassed a broad

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spectrum, and included global operational environments and a full range of potential adversaries.<sup>78</sup> The uncertainty over the role the Regiment was to play made it difficult to focus training, to justify expenditures within the organization as satisfying the national interest, and to adequately fulfil tasks across a broad spectrum when required.



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## **The Early Successes and The Road to Decline**

The early years of the Cdn AB Regt were exceptional, but it was to reach the height of its existence in the early 1970s.<sup>79</sup> The formation consisted of the highest quality volunteers from across the Army and they conducted challenging training that further honed the skills of these motivated individuals. The Regiment travelled extensively to train and was even considered as favoured within the Army. This was in part due the



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quality of the soldiers, the Regiment's status as a formation, direct access to the Army Commander, and once again, to politically expediency.

A renewed emphasis on Arctic sovereignty emerged within Canada that inevitably became tied to the Cdn AB Regt. While the Regiment initially focussed on tasks across many environments, the political emphasis on Arctic sovereignty forced a change to this focus. This was a problem because the role of protecting Canada's sovereignty in the North might have been a high priority but it was also in response to a minimal threat that did not warrant a robust and capable airborne force.<sup>80</sup> Political opponents correctly accused the Trudeau Liberals of exploiting the Arctic for political purposes. The opponents were to be proven correct over time because once the political emphasis to defend the North abated, so too diminished the Liberal Government's emphasis on the Arctic. Consequently the importance of the primary role of Cdn AB Regt was diminished.<sup>81</sup> Without politically expedient support for the primary role of the formation, it became harder and harder to maintain their favoured status within the Army.

The Regiment was not without purpose and it was employed operationally numerous times throughout its life, but never in a role that required either the airborne or special force capabilities that it anticipated. The first operational employment was during the 1970 crisis in Quebec. The Regiment deployed within an hour from Edmonton and participated alongside thousands of other Canadian Forces members in Operation ESSAY.<sup>82</sup> The speed of the deployment was impressive but the duties required in this aid to civil power were not specifically suited to airborne forces. The second operational opportunity came in 1974 as part of a United Nations force in Cyprus. Part of the Regiment was in theatre as part of a normal rotation when the crisis escalated to the point that the remainder of the Cdn AB Regt was sent to reinforce the mission. The reinforced contingent performed very well and the rapid reaction of the Regiment was again impressive but, as before, the unit had proven rapidly deployable but had not performed a uniquely airborne role. The same is true of its subsequent operational task as a rapid reaction force during the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.<sup>83</sup>

The focus of the Cdn AB Regt started changing in the late 1970s as it was moved from Edmonton, under fierce opposition, to Petawawa as part of the Special Service Force (SSF) to create a rapid reaction formation in central Canada. This move added two more tasks to the list maintained by the Regiment, response to a major air disaster (MAJAJD) in the North and filling slots in the Cyprus rotation plan.<sup>84</sup>

The CDS, General Dextraze, denied that politics played any part in the move but the decision did ensure that the Army was well represented in Ontario and had a new reason to justify an expensive formation at a time when the military was under considerable financial strain.<sup>85</sup> Dextraze admitted to the Commons Defence Committee in 1977 that the move was made to save money and that the Regiment would be less effective in its new location.<sup>86</sup> And so throughout the 1980s the Regiment completed two more normal rotations to Cyprus, and while it continued to anticipate that it would be required to employ its specialized skills and training operationally, the reality was far less exciting.

The reality of the situation facing the Cdn AB Regt started with their politically expedient move to Petawawa. This move had far reaching consequences that were not foreseen at the time. The formation's direct contact with the Army Commander was now interrupted by a brigade commander, and the Regiment was now subject to the same level of normal tasks that every other Army unit faced. There were no airheads or drop zones in Petawawa, and they were now separated from the aircraft needed to conduct airborne training. The troops now had to drive four hours to an airfield that was too far away from the Arctic to make most trips in one leg. All these factors tended to reduce training and thus combat effectiveness. But perhaps more importantly it denied the high

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strung soldiers of the unit adequate avenues to maintain morale and discipline through intense training.<sup>87</sup> By 1985, the situation came to a head when a civilian was killed by a machete wielding paratrooper. Major-General Hewson, Chief of Intelligence and Security, investigated the problems in the Cdn AB Regt but despite identifying many structural and leadership issues, no action was taken. No special instructions were given to the Regimental Commander to solve the problems that Hewson discovered and overall, the SSF Commander did not expect that the chain of command had any reason to worry about the Regiment in the future.<sup>88</sup>

The trends that were established throughout the 1980s were allowed to continue. The Cdn AB Regt was increasingly viewed as no more special or different than any other infantry unit. This loss of status kept the question of relevance at the forefront of a political military situation where every cost was being closely scrutinized.<sup>89</sup> Why did Canada need to retain specialized forces to complete tasks that general purpose forces were equally suited to carry out?

The lack of a credible and distinct role relegated the Regiment to the whims of politically expedient purposes. When defending northern sovereignty was politically important, the Regiment was held up as an example of success. When other commitments (international or domestic) were at the fore, the Regiment was seen as just another unit in the tasking pool. In fact, the lack of a credible threat or role in the North meant that neither resources nor action were considered necessary to maintain Canada's airborne capability. The result was an organization that was in constant uncertainty about the future. While they were convinced that they were a vital asset and they anticipated that airborne forces would some day be required to play a unique role in the defence of the Canada, this anticipation was unfounded.

*In Part II, which will appear in the next issue of CAJ, Lieutenant-Colonel Jayne will discuss the disbandment of the Cdn AB Regt, the current ongoing discussion about the need for airborne forces and his opinion of the future of Canadian airborne capability.*

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## Endnotes

1. Bellerophon was tasked with a series of heroic but, normally deadly tasks. His first task was to kill the terrible Chimaera, his second to conquer a neighbouring tribe, his third to fight the Amazons, and finally he was ambushed by an entire army. This army was killed to the last man. His courage, honour and skill as an archer combined with Pegasus as a mount allowed him to prevail, bringing him the favour of the gods. He gained a kingdom where his subjects loved and honoured him. It appeared that Bellerophon would live happily ever after. His glorious deeds were widely sung, and he was happily married with two sons and two daughters. But, all this was not enough for Bellerophon. In his arrogance he decided that he could ride Pegasus to Mount Olympus and visit the gods. Zeus quickly put an end to his trip by sending the Gadfly to sting Pegasus and throw Bellerophon. He survived his fall but was crippled. He spent the rest of his life wandering the earth. No man would help him because of his offense to the gods. He died alone with no one to record his fate. John M. Hunt, "Greek Mythology: Hero Bellerophon." <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/people/bdodge/scaffold/GG/bellerophon.html>; Internet; accessed 8 December 2006.
2. Fort Eben Emael was reputed to be the most impregnable military stronghold in the world and was defended by 800 troops. It guarded key crossings as part of Belgium's eastern defences. Although immune to conventional attack, it was proven vulnerable to attack from the air. A small glider force of 78 soldiers and 300 follow-on paratroopers was successful in neutralizing the Fort ahead of the German advance into Belgium. James E. Mrazek, *The Fall of Eben Emael*, (USA: Presidio Press, 1970), 13-14, 25.
3. Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus*, (St. Catharine's, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 14.
4. Bernd Horn, *Bastard Sons: An examination of Canada's Airborne Experience 1942-1995*, (St. Catharine's, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2001), 15.
5. A detailed explanation of differences between parachute and airborne capability will be provided later. The former is a basic ability to deliver troops by parachute in a permissive environment, while the latter involves the complete capability of protecting, transporting, sustaining and supporting forces delivered from the air against a capable enemy.
6. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Tories would bring back airborne regiment," <http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2005/12/13/elxn-harper-military.html>; Internet; accessed 8 December 2006.
7. Department of National Defence, B-GL-322-004/FP-004 *Airborne Operations*, (Ottawa, Ontario: DND, 1990), 11.

8. Department of National Defence, B-GL-302-011/FT-001 *Airmobile Operations*, (Ottawa, Ontario: DND, 1989). Although this publication still exists, it is not clear whether or not it has been superseded.
9. Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-002/FP-000 *Land Force Tactical Doctrine*, (Ottawa, Ontario: DND, 1997), 7-3. In addition, a recent CF Study defined airborne as "the ability to conduct combat operations once delivered by parachute." Department of National Defence, *The Canadian Forces Parachute Capability Study Report*, (Chief of Land Staff: file 1901-2 (DLFS 2-4), 18 May 2000), 2.
10. North Atlantic Treaty Organization Standardization Agency, *AAP-6 NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, (2006): 2-A-4; <http://www.nato.int/docu/stanag/aap006/AAP-6-2006.pdf>; Internet; accessed 8 December 2006; and United States, Department of the Army, FM 90-26 *Airborne Operations*, (Washington, DC: 1990), 1-4.
11. Elite forces are units that are assigned special or unusual missions; conduct missions that require only a few highly trained men; and that have a reputation for bravery and success. Eliot A. Cohen, *Commandos and Politicians—Elite Military Units in Modern Democracies*, (USA: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1978), 17.
12. Tom Clancy, *Airborne: A Guided Tour of an Airborne Task Force*, (New York: Berkley Books, 1997), 2.
13. DND, B-GL-302-011/FT-001 *Airmobile Operations*..., 13-14; and United States, Department of the Army, FM 90-26 *Airborne Operations*, (Washington, DC: 1990), 1-5.
14. Horn, *Bastard Sons*..., 15.
15. DND, B-GL-322-004/FP-004 *Airborne Operations*..., 12.
16. *Ibid.*, 12-13.
17. Clancy, *Airborne: A Guided Tour*..., 3.
- 18 USA, DoD, FM 90-26: *Airborne Operations*..., 1-7—1-10.
19. Department of National Defence, *The Canadian Forces Parachute Capability Study*..., 2. A parachute capability is defined as the ability to deliver personnel, equipment and/or materiel by parachute into permissive and limited non-permissive environments.
20. Although there have been large numbers of airborne operations during the post The Second World War period, they have decreased dramatically over the intervening years. For example, Professor Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski list over 110 airborne operations during the war years. This large number is surpassed in the five years following the war (dominated by French units), but it then takes from 1951 until 2003 to again reach 100 international airborne operations. Indeed, in the last 20 years, there are only four listed, all American, of which one was aborted (1994 in Haiti) and one was into a secure airfield (173<sup>rd</sup> Abn Bde at Mosul). Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, *Hook-Up! The Canadian Airborne Compendium: A Summary of Major Airborne Activities, Exercises and Operations, 1940-2000*, (St. Catharines, Ontario: Vanwell Publishing Limited, 2003), 197-218.
21. *Ibid.*, 197-218.
22. Although other countries such as France, Belgium and the United Kingdom have used airborne forces during the post war period, the American experience provides the best measure of the overall employment of airborne capability. In terms of western powers, the United States has maintained the largest airborne forces following The Second World War and been the most active internationally using military power for political means. Edward M. Flanagan Jr., Lt. Gen. USA (Ret.), *Airborne: A Combat History of American Airborne Forces*, (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 2002), 389-394.
23. Bruce Quarrie, *Airborne Assault: Parachute Forces in Action, 1940-1991*, (Great Britain: J.H. Haynes & Co. Ltd., 1991), 153-155.
24. Flanagan, *Airborne: A Combat History*..., 383-386.
25. *Ibid.*, 392-393.
26. *Ibid.*, 405.
27. Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 11-12.
28. Horn, *Bastard Sons*..., 28; and Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 17.
29. Horn, *Bastard Sons*..., 29-30.
30. *Ibid.*, 31.
31. *Ibid.*, 31-34.
32. *Ibid.*, 32.
33. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 24; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 13-15.
34. Horn, *Bastard Sons*..., 29-30.; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 48. The desire to retain national control was a result of the struggle during World War I to create a force with a distinct national identity to enhance national pride and a collective sense of accomplishment.
35. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 24; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 117-118.
36. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 30; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 124-126.
37. Horn, *Bastard Sons*..., 35; Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 30; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 128, 130-31.
38. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus* ..., 33; and Brian Nolan, *Airborne*..., 138-39.
39. Flanagan, *Airborne: A Combat History*..., 288, 290.
40. Quarrie, *Airborne Assault*..., 139-40.
41. *Ibid.*, 191-94.
42. *Ibid.*, 195-96.
43. *Ibid.*, 2.
44. David A. Charters, "Armed Forces and Political Purpose: Airborne Forces and the Canadian Army in the 1980s", (dissertation University of New Brunswick, 1984), 51.

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45. Sean M. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force and Continental Defence 1948-1955," *Canadian Military History* Vol. 2, no. 2 (1993), 77-78.
  46. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 69-70; and Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 69-70.
  47. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 71.
  48. *Ibid.*, 71.
  49. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 71.
  50. *Ibid.*, 72.
  51. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force...", 77; and David A. Charters, "Five Lost Years: The Mobile Striking Force 1946-1951," *Canadian Defence Quarterly* Vol. 7, no. 1 (1978): 44.
  52. Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 74.
  53. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force...", 77-79.
  54. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 77.
  55. Colin S. Gray, *Canadian Defence Priorities: A Question of Relevance* (Toronto, Ontario: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited, 1972), 27.
  56. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force...", 82.
  57. Charters, "Five Lost Years...", 46.
  58. Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force...", 86.
  59. Charters, "Five Lost Years...", 46.
  60. *Ibid.*, 47.
  61. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 100.
  62. David Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada's Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1996), 55.
  63. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 110.
  64. Douglas L. Bland, *Chiefs of Defence: Government and the Unified Command of the Canadian Armed Forces*, (Toronto, Brown Book Company Limited, 1995), 58.
  65. *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Defence Policy*, R.J. Sutherland, Chairman, (Ottawa, Ontario: DND, 30 September 1963), 80, 89, and 173.
  66. Paul Hellyer, *White Paper on Defence*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, Canada, 1964), 22.
  67. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 103.
  68. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 103-104.
  69. Paul Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedos: My Fight to Unify Canada's Armed Forces*, (Canada: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990), 43-46.
  70. Paul Hellyer, *Address on The Canadian Forces Reorganization Act*, 7 December 1966, 19.
  71. The Cdn AB Regt was established under the National Defence Act as a formation commanded by a colonel, consisting of three battalion-size commandos commanded by lieutenant-colonels, supported by artillery, combat engineers, and logistics elements. While restricted in peacetime to just over 700 personnel, its wartime strength was over 3,000.
  72. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 107.
  73. Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 171.
  74. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 109.
  75. Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 171-173.
  76. *Ibid.*, 175.
  77. *Ibid.*, 173-174.
  78. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 120-122; and Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 197.
  79. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 108.
  80. Charters, "Armed Forces and Political Purpose...", 71.
  81. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 126-127.
  82. Charters, "Armed Forces and Political Purpose...", 73.
  83. *Ibid.*, 73-74.
  84. Horn and Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus...*, 113.
  85. Bland, *Chiefs of Defence...*, 238-239; and Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 200-201.
  86. Charters, "Armed Forces and Political Purpose...", 76.
  87. Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 202-203; and Charters, "Armed Forces and Political Purpose...", 74-76.
  88. Bercuson, *Significant Incident...*, 210.
  89. Horn, *Bastard Sons...*, 167.

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# THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN

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Major Tod Strickland, CD

The dramatic events of 11 September 2001 affected the modern world in ways far beyond the deaths of several thousand civilians in New York City. Almost immediately (within two months), the American military found itself confronting an enemy in the rugged hills of Afghanistan that it knew comparatively little about—the Taliban. In early 2002 the Canadian Forces contributed its first contingent to fight this enemy as part of Operation Enduring Freedom, and like its neighbour to the south, Canada found itself engaged in a counter-insurgency against a non-state<sup>1</sup> based adversary about whom it possessed limited, and cursory knowledge. In the intervening five years, this situation has arguably changed very little.

The Taliban are a force shrouded in myth and mystery whose very existence has affected both popular opinions and the conventional wisdom of the media, our militaries and politicians. Yet they are not well understood, with understanding of their background and formation belonging in the realm more of “urban legend” than hard fact. Their belief system and primary motivators are often not even discussed or linked to our proposed means to combat them. Cloaking themselves, both literally and figuratively, in the robes of Islam, they have first actively sought and held power, and then abandoned their posts in the face of fallout from their handling of Osama Bin Laden in the wake of 9/11. Currently they remain one of the principle insurgent groups in Afghanistan, particularly in the Kandahar Province. The intent of this paper is to examine their background and formation, as well as to discuss their linkages to several sovereign states, and their recruiting, financing and employment of full spectrum conflict to achieve their aims. The article then summarizes some ideas on how the Canadian Army can combat them, specifically at the strategic and operational levels. Prior to beginning the examination however, it is worth setting the stage and situating this force both geographically and in time.



Figure 1: Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>

As can be seen on the map (Figure 1), Afghanistan is a relatively small country to the immediate north of Pakistan, sandwiched between Iran to the west, several former Soviet Republics in the north and China in the east.<sup>3</sup> Extremely rugged, landlocked, and possessing a population that is largely tribal in outlook, it is an ideal area in which to conduct an insurgency (as the British, Soviets and most recently NATO have all found). In some ways the country is an artificial construct, with very little national culture; the tribes making up the country are the principle social and cultural focus for many in the population.

From the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the early 1973, the country was ruled by a succession of monarchs, with the main constant being a series of conflicts against



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the super-power of the age. Few governments, if any, achieved any real control over the country or its population. Persistently economically poor, it can reasonably be argued that her people never developed a sense of the purpose behind a central government or what one should expect in the way of benefits from nationhood. In 1973, the military overthrew the King following a drought and "allegations of corruption."<sup>4</sup> Ultimately this coup would lead to further governmental overthrows, which in turn gave rise to a country-wide insurrection lead by the Mujahidin. This insurrection then gave the Soviet Union the pretext it needed to invade the country in 1979 (or be invited in according to official Soviet accounts); this was the singular act most responsible for the ultimate rise of the Taliban as an entity.

For ten years the Soviets would fight the Mujahidin throughout Afghanistan, before finally accepting defeat and withdrawing from the country.<sup>5</sup> When they left, the Soviets turned the country over to their appointed leader, President Najibullah, who was powerless in exerting any control over the country and its people. Instead, the various factions of the Mujahidin fell to infighting, with each trying to take Kabul (the nation's capital) and assume power. It was the act of leaving Kabul to the Mujahidin, and the tacit abandonment of Afghanistan by the international community, which, in the words of Canadian writer Kathy Gannon, "set in motion the chaos that would eventually bring the Taliban to power."<sup>6</sup>

## Formation

That the Taliban "formed in response to the failure of the Mujahidin to establish a stable government after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 and the collapse in 1992 of the government they left behind,"<sup>7</sup> is generally agreed upon. Indeed, noted scholar David Edwards has argued that:

This inability on the part of the resistance organizations to work together provided the opening for the Taliban to challenge and ultimately vanquish the established parties in most of the country...<sup>8</sup>

The actual events of the formation, however, receive little consensus, beyond the fact that a man from the village of Sangesar, named Mullah Mohammed Omar, was the principle actor in the Taliban's creation.<sup>9</sup> He has been described as a "simple...former mujahidin...schooled only at a village madrasa,"<sup>10</sup> while Pakistani author Ahmed Rashid has described him as "a Robin Hood figure, helping the poor against rapacious commanders."<sup>11</sup> Aside from the fact that he played a central role in the founding of the movement, the stories behind the actual events vary widely.

One account has Omar, incensed upon coming upon the victims of a murder and rape on the road to Kandahar, spurred into action against the lawlessness afflicting his country;<sup>12</sup> another has the Prophet Mohammed appearing in a dream and ordering him to "bring peace to Afghanistan."<sup>13</sup> Yet another casts him as the "willing puppet of Pakistan's secret intelligence agency, the ISI."<sup>14</sup> In one of the more credible versions, described by Kathy Gannon, Mullah Omar was travelling to Kandahar from his village and was stopped no less than five successive times to pay "road-tax," with each incident serving to infuriate him more and more. Upon arrival in Kandahar, he then undertook to do something about the situation, and after gathering a force of between thirty and sixty men, attacked one of the checkpoints. In amazement, the soldiers at the checkpoint abandoned their posts, from which a domino effect begins with Mullah Omar and his men attacking successive outposts and defeating their enemies. Ultimately, he at first restored law and order to the province of Kandahar, and then began the take-over of Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup>

By 1996, the movement had evicted other factions from Kabul; in 1998 they gained control of Mazar-e-sharif and were the de facto rulers of the country.<sup>16</sup> Initially, the population was cautiously optimistic—the Taliban had managed to end the lawlessness and “enjoyed...popularity as a reform movement.”<sup>17</sup> In fact, this spirit of optimism was not limited to Afghanistan, and international observers can also be characterized as sharing the hope of the Afghan people with regard to the ultimate effect of the Taliban’s rapid rise to power.<sup>18</sup> Sadly, once in power the Taliban revealed the true nature of their regime.



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Using a structure that one author characterized as being similar, ironically, to that of the “Roman Catholic Church,”<sup>19</sup> where Mullah Omar was viewed as “infallible,”<sup>20</sup> the Taliban began the radical process of implementing Islamic law (sharia) on a national scale, reflecting the worldview of Omar himself and his own “understanding of Islamic precepts of government.”<sup>21</sup> This process has been described as “an attempt to go back in time,” to a “world of simple truths that resembled Islam in the seventh century.”<sup>22</sup> Almost overnight, the rules of social conduct changed, with women being barred from educational opportunities and even healthcare, men being expected to grow full beards and adopt traditional dress, and “any social mingling or communication among men and women outside the family” being forbidden.<sup>23</sup> This had the effect of earning world-wide shock and disapproval, to the extent that the regime was only recognized by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>24</sup>

For five years, the regime lead by Omar ruled Afghanistan and ultimately sowed the seeds of its own demise when they accepted Osama Bin Laden on their soil. In the wake of 9/11 they refused to hand him over to American authorities.<sup>25</sup> Within two months of the attacks in New York, the American military began working with other groups in Afghanistan. The Americans relied upon a pairing of “Special Forces teams and airpower with local commanders and militias.”<sup>26</sup> While devastating against the Taliban, this arrangement would also have unanticipated consequences when it came time to decide who had won the war—the Americans or the warlords that they were working with.<sup>27</sup>

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By 7 December 2001, the Taliban had departed their capital, and within a short period, the government of Harmid Karzai was in power. It was soon after this point that the Taliban evolved and became an insurgency against the legitimate government. It is to the examination of this insurgency that we now turn: who are the men that make up the Taliban, what do they believe, where do they get their support and what means do they use to meet their goal of returning to power?

## The Taliban

It is from Omar's adherents that we get the name "Taliban." Meaning "the students of Islam,"<sup>28</sup> the movement was comprised of former Mujahidin and the young students of Deobandi madrassas in Pakistan<sup>29</sup>—the product of refugee camps resultant from the Afghan-Soviet War. In order to comprehend the Taliban it is imperative that one understand the manner in which they were generally reared in these camps. Journalist Robert Fisk has described this upbringing as:

Their first sixteen years of life were passed in blind poverty, deprived of all education and entertainment, imposing their own deadly punishments, their mothers and sisters kept in subservience... their only diversion a detailed and obsessive reading of the Koran...<sup>30</sup>

Ahmed Rashid, writing in what is probably the single best resource on the Taliban, has described the end result of this rearing, in an oft-cited passage, as follows:

These boys were a world apart from the Mujaheddin [sic] whom I had got to know during the 1980s—men who could recount their tribal and clan lineages, remembered their abandoned farms and valleys with nostalgia and recounted legends and stories from Afghan history. These boys were from a generation who had never seen their country at peace—an Afghanistan not at war with invaders and itself... They had no memories of the past, no plans for the future while the present was everything. They were literally the orphans of the war, the rootless and the restless, the jobless and the economically deprived with little self-knowledge. They admired war because it was the only occupation they could possibly adapt to. Their simple belief in a messianic, puritan Islam which had been drummed into them by simple village mullahs was the only prop they could hold on to and which gave their lives some meaning.<sup>31</sup>

Although many were Afghans, it needs to be noted that this is not solely an Afghan enterprise. Taliban forces include many "Pakistani [and] Arab militants" as well as warriors from throughout south and central Asia and the entire Arab world.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, there are Taliban soldiers from both North America and Australia (Omar Khadr who is currently being held in Guantanamo Bay is in fact a Canadian).

Leadership is exercised by Mullah Omar and his lieutenants, with Omar adopting a behind-the-scenes, nearly invisible role. This invisibility has served to take the majority of the emphasis off of the individual and put it more on the movement itself.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, it offers protection and security for him and his lieutenants, making it that much harder for coalition and Afghan forces to target him personally. That a minor religious scholar would play such a dominant role in the conduct of the insurgency may be considered a bit of a surprise, however, in order to understand the Taliban, it is imperative that one acknowledge the centrality of religious beliefs to the movement itself.

Being educated in the madrassas (religious schools) of Pakistan's refugee camps, the youth that would become the Taliban were exposed to what would politely be termed "extremist" schools of Islamic jurisprudence—namely the "Deobandi" and "Wahhabists."<sup>34</sup> This was a deliberate process, on the part of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which can be legitimately viewed as being a principle factor in the situation we face today.

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As far as Pakistan was concerned, the events are best described by author Charles Allen, who wrote:

General Zia sought to bring the Pathans on-side by encouraging the establishment of madrassas in the tribal border areas...This was part and parcel of his program of Islamicisation.<sup>35</sup>

Zia's desires were in some ways the logical outflow of the situation that Pakistan faced in the early 1970's. Bangladesh had just separated from their parent country, and the General no doubt saw a serious threat to the political and geographical integrity of his nation. By undergoing a deliberate program of Islamicisation he probably hoped to minimize the nascent threats to Pakistan.<sup>36</sup>

The madrassas that were constructed were in the main staffed by members of the Deobandi sect, which had gradually come into Pakistan from India over the course of the Twentieth Century. By Allen's estimate, "65 per cent" of the madrassas in Pakistan "were directly or indirectly Deobandi" and "of the 1.7 million students...1.25 million were receiving a Deoband-based education."<sup>37</sup>

The Deobandis take their name from the village in India where their initial madrasa was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They are "a branch of Sunni Hannafi Islam"<sup>38</sup> which initially attempted to reconcile "traditional or classical Islam with modern life."<sup>39</sup> Now however, the education that is given in the ever expanding network of Deobandi madrassas can be classed as very conservative and based primarily upon Islamic law and jurisprudence.<sup>40</sup> Scholar Burnett Rubin has characterized their beliefs as:

[they] reject all forms of ijthihad<sup>41</sup>... [they] oppose all forms of hierarchy within the Muslim community, including tribalism or royalty, favour excluding Shia from participation in the polity, and take a very restrictive view of the social role of women. All these characteristics of the Indian and Pakistani Deobandis are found in exaggerated form among the Afghan Taliban.<sup>42</sup>

John Esposito has put it more succinctly, arguing that they are "rigid, militant, anti-American and anti-non-Muslim culture."<sup>43</sup> He goes on to articulate that this school:

...espoused a myopic, self-contained, militant worldview in which Islam is used to legitimate [sic] their tribal customs and preferences. The classical Islamic belief in jihad as a defense of Islam and the Muslim community against aggression was transformed into a militant jihad culture and worldview that targets unbelievers, including Muslims and non-Muslims alike.<sup>44</sup>

Closely related to the Deobandis, the Wahhabis are a separate but very similar sect which receives similar national support from Saudi Arabia to that given by Pakistan to the Deobandis. Wahhabism has "never enjoyed mass support" in the Islamic world, primarily because, in the words of Charles Allen, it is "rooted in violent intolerance, which has few charms."<sup>45</sup> Much like the establishment of the Deobandis, the founder of the Wahhabis "saw himself as a reformer and revivalist reacting against corruptions inside Islam."<sup>46</sup> For him and his adherents the methodology that was to be used was "no more than [to return to] Islam in its purest, original form."<sup>47</sup> They are rightly viewed as an extremist Sunni sect, whose "strict beliefs and interpretations...are not commonly shared by other Sunni or by Shii...throughout the Muslim world."<sup>48</sup>

It is doubtful that the Wahhabis would continue to exist without the state-sanctioned support provided by Saudi Arabia.<sup>49</sup> Originally this support was given to the sect within Saudi Arabia as a response to the secular policies espoused by Nasser in Egypt, and was undertaken quite deliberately.<sup>50</sup> Looking to counter what was then viewed as a significant threat to the Islamic population, "Saudi Arabia created stated-financed international Islamic organizations to promote its Wahhabi-based pan-Islamic vision of

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ideology.”<sup>51</sup> With the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979, these efforts were stepped up in a bid to mitigate the influence of Ayatollah Khomeini on the Shia branch of Islam.<sup>52</sup> It must be noted that these endeavours were largely financed by the significant profits which had accrued to the Saudi state as a result of our own desire for petroleum; it is not a stretch to argue that the west largely paid for the exporting of this brand of extremism to much of the Muslim world—including Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The physical manifestation of the support provided by Saudi Arabia was the creation of madrassas along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. The beliefs and practices within the schools are aptly described by Canadian journalist Eric Margolis, who writes:

Education in the madrassas was basic: memorizing the Holy Koran and learning the rudiment of reading and writing...Some of the Saudi and Gulf-funded madrassas were staffed by Mullahs and teachers from Arabia... [they] brought with them Wahhabism...<sup>53</sup>

The Wahhabi version of faith was little different from the Deobandi. Robert Fisk has stated that “It was a purist, Sunni...faith whose interpretation of Sharia law recalled the most draconian of Christian prelates.”<sup>54</sup> The similarities between the two sects have sometimes led to a belief that they are in fact the same. This is not the case, although they both articulate similar views on the world at large and the role of Islam in it; that they were both present in the refugee camps in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan can only be described as unfortunate. Drawing willing, extremist-minded recruits from these madrassas, the Taliban possesses a significant recruiting base from which to find new insurgents.

Pakistani support however has not strictly been limited to the provision of education and indoctrination to the Taliban’s recruiting base; the state was also active in the supply of direct support to the Taliban regime and it is probably a safe assertion to argue that segments of the Pakistani government are still backing elements within the insurgency. In the words of Michael Rubin, Pakistan was the “diplomatic and economic lifeline” which “supplied a constant flow of munitions and recruits... [and] crucial technical infrastructure support to allow the Taliban state to function...”<sup>55</sup> Coupled with this was the contribution from the Pakistani intelligence agency, the ISI, which began providing assistance to the Afghan resistance movement as early as the mid-1970s.<sup>56</sup> Indeed when one considers that it was the ISI that was directly responsible for the coordination of delivery of sustenance to the Mujahidin, and that they “refused to recognize any Afghan resistance group that was not religiously based”<sup>57</sup> it can be reasonably argued they contributed directly to the initial formation of the Taliban by both fracturing the cohesion of the Mujahidin and promoting Islamism. Further, it warrants note that this “shoring-up” is not limited to the Pakistani government and some writers have stated that:

The Taliban receive support from traders based in Quetta, Peshawar, and Karachi who are engaged in the transit and drug trade...they have contributed to the Taliban’s treasury and are regularly assessed as needs arise.<sup>58</sup>

It is in the realm of funding Pakistani support to the Taliban, that the relationship with Saudi Arabia becomes apparent. Returning to the words of Burnett Rubin, writing in 1999:

*Saudi Arabia appears to have continued to fund much of Pakistan’s policy in Afghanistan through both official and unofficial channels... Saudi Arabia feels some affinity to the Taliban interpretation of Islam, and support for the Taliban is consistent with its rivalry with Iran and long-term strategic cooperation with Pakistan.*<sup>59</sup>



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Not all support for either the regime or the insurgency comes from foreign states, and, as mentioned above, the provision of drugs, specifically opium, does provide a source of revenue as well. When they initially took power, the Taliban made overtures to the international community wherein they would eliminate the growing of poppy, and thus the provision of much of the world's heroin. This has been viewed as nothing more than a "negotiating card" by some authors.<sup>60</sup> As noted by Sean Maloney, this ploy actually served to encourage poppy growers, by both driving up the world price for the product and by forcing them to pay a tax for the privilege of growing the flower.<sup>61</sup> Others, like Robert Kaplan and Charles Briscoe have been equally blunt, with Kaplan asserting that drugs contribute directly to the funds available to the Taliban,<sup>62</sup> while Briscoe states that "the reality was that opium consumption helped finance the fighting necessary for the Taliban to gain control of the country."<sup>63</sup> There is no reason to believe that this situation has changed now that the Taliban has lost power in Afghanistan.

When the American military began their campaign, which ultimately led to the destruction of the Taliban government, the Taliban was able to conduct operations at "company and battalion" sized levels. However, by the "late spring of 2002" they had "ceased to be a tangible entity" beyond platoon-sized organizations.<sup>64</sup> This the result of encounters with American air power and special forces assets. Since that time, the Taliban have adopted a "Fourth Generation Warfare" approach to the conduct of operations; this is the only reasonable response to the overwhelming conventional military superiority resident in the American military and that of their allies on the ground in Afghanistan.<sup>65</sup>

Though some have argued that the current tactics employed by the Taliban are those of the terrorist,<sup>66</sup> this is a bit of a mischaracterization, in that the means being employed against the NATO coalition within Afghanistan do not generally seem aimed at terrorizing the local populace. Instead, they should be viewed as demonstrating, to both the Afghans and the coalition, that the environment is far from secure and that the Karzai government is ineffective in meeting the basic needs of its people. There have been numerous incidents, such as the burning of schools and the killing of local leaders and teachers<sup>67</sup> that do aim to terrorize the Afghan people, but to refer to the Taliban as terrorists may verge on hyperbole.

At the tactical level, the Taliban fighters have consistently demonstrated skills and abilities warranting their respect as an adversary. Although relying on a mixture of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers and ambushes, they continually display the ability to adapt and innovate, countering coalition tactics, techniques and procedures in a manner that clearly shows their ability to learn through the execution of operations. Further, their ability to police a battlefield, thus depriving coalition forces of intelligence, while also caring for their own wounded and dead belies a level of sophistication well beyond that which might be expected.<sup>68</sup>

They make excellent use of modern means of communications, including the cellular phone and the ICOM radio, coupling it with remarkably capable observation networks which serve to monitor coalition movements and necessitating the incorporation of deception into friendly tactical planning. In some ways their embracing of technology can be viewed as ironic, for although their aim might be to return to a more fundamentalist version of Islam, they do not seem afraid of using modern tools in obtaining their prize.

They are a cunning and creative enemy, who possess many of the traits that should engender a respect for their capabilities from their enemies within the coalition. Their understanding of fourth generation war, and information operations on an international scale, is in many ways superior to our own. To underestimate them and ignore their

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obvious abilities is to make a grave error; exposes coalition forces and creates a vulnerability that can be ill-afforded. However, they are not invincible; the seeds of their destruction are, in many ways, already in place.

## **Combating the Taliban**

It needs to be stated from the outset that the focus of the following thoughts on combating the Taliban is more on the operational and strategic, vice the tactical, levels of land warfare. My reasons for this approach are primarily because it is at these levels that I believe our efforts are lacking the clear vision and intent that is required to beat our enemy. At the tactical level our operators are generally solving the problems that they encounter when dealing with the Taliban, but victory will not be as much the product of their actions as one might hope. If we are to succeed against the Taliban, it will be the result of strategic and operational level decisions to specifically target the inherent weaknesses within the Taliban as an entity, and not stem from our low-level successes (as important as these most certainly are). Possessing an understanding of what serves to motivate these warriors will expose potential avenues of attack that can serve to undermine the power of the Taliban at the source, rather than attempting to resolve the issue on the battlefield.

However, the potential solutions which follow should not be misconstrued as being conducted in isolation (i.e. without a concurrent application of military force); to do so would expose us to the underside of Kathy Gannon's "truism" in Afghanistan: "strength equals respect, weakness equals fear."<sup>69</sup> We must therefore continue to demonstrate military strength in parallel with the ideas proposed below if we are to maintain credibility with the Afghan people, while minimizing the influence and abilities of the Taliban.

Our first step should be the mitigation of the theological influences which are the underlying motivation for the current generation, and perhaps the future generation, of Taliban warriors. To be certain, this is by no means an easy process and the likelihood of influencing current members of the Taliban is probably limited. However, if we are to remove them from the battlefield, we need to first remove the strict tenets of Deobandism and Wahhabism, which provide the motivation for them to continue fighting. This could be done by injecting moderate imams from the western world into the mix within the mosques of Afghanistan, and into the Kandahar province in particular; by undertaking diplomatic initiatives with both the Pakistanis and the Saudis to have them cease funding extremist madrassas which continue to churn out the next generation of fighters.

This could be coupled with a western effort to fund either secular or moderate-Islamic based educational facilities within both Afghanistan and Pakistan itself. It should be noted that the construction of schoolhouses is not enough to make this work; efforts need to be made to identify teachers and staff who will then be able to impart either a secular curriculum or a much more tempered version of Islam than that to which students in this region are currently being exposed. Again, there is no doubt as to the difficulty and cost of this course of action; however, in the end it is equally certain that unless we change the way that people think when they come out of the madrassas, there is little likelihood of success.

The element of education is also something that must be considered by relief agencies, including the United Nations. Much of the current problem stems from the fact that the only educational opportunities available to refugees from the Afghan-Soviet War were resident in extremist madrassas. Education, as an integral part of relief efforts, coordinated and controlled by those funding the construction and sustainment of the camps, must become the norm. To do otherwise is to simply allow for another version of extremism to crop up.

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On a more tangible note, we also need to exploit the opportunities afforded by tribalism over the pan-Islamic dogma and theory that currently give the insurgency a portion of its power. Our first course of action needs to be the consistent reinforcement of the legitimate government of Afghanistan, however this does not always achieve results in a society with little tradition, respect for, or understanding of a central government. In cases where this type of situation exists, we should be promoting the tribe as an entity and source of power, over the village imam or mullah.

Pursuing a different avenue, we also need to stop indirectly funding the Taliban through our society's use of illicit drugs, and the purchase of fossil fuels from Saudi Arabia. The dollars that are being spent by our populations and our governments, which are then ending up in the pockets of the Taliban, are akin to us providing bullets with which to see our soldiers, diplomats and aid-workers shot. Options that might make this achievable include purchasing the poppy crop from Afghan farmers ourselves, and either destroying it or using it for medicinal purposes. Western societies subsidize farmers throughout their countries; why not subsidize Afghan farmers to the point that they no longer grow poppy? We could pay them far more than the Taliban to grow nothing, and even more to grow an alternative crop that could provide sustenance for their families.<sup>70</sup>

The purchase of fossil fuels is a somewhat more difficult nut to crack, but our dependence on these fuels, and our purchasing of them from extremist regimes simply is not a sustainable course of action. Notwithstanding the obvious harm it does to the environment, we are providing our enemies a vulnerability which can be exploited while concurrently bankrolling their efforts. We need to undertake concentrated, deliberate efforts to wean ourselves from this critical element in the Taliban's ability to continue to prosecute operations.<sup>71</sup>

As previously argued, security needs to continue to be provided, although we must be wary of attempting to copy the model provided by the Soviet Union, of attempting to "destroy an idea with firepower."<sup>72</sup> Though such an approach might remove the immediate threat, it also contributes to the growth of the next generation of fighters. Every Taliban we kill leaves behind a mother, father, brother or son who will potentially become more disillusioned with the legitimate regime and more disposed to take up the cause that killed his loved one. This lesson is inherent in the conduct of almost every counter-insurgency over the past two hundred years, and it is one we can ill afford to ignore. Our use of force has to be less like a bludgeon and far more like a scalpel if it is to contribute positively to the eradication of the current threat.

Such a fight is going to take time. This caution is ably provided by Thomas Hammes, who has stated that "we must be prepared for the long-term close-in fight necessary to destroy [the Taliban] network."<sup>73</sup> However, the prognosis for success is not as grim as some might believe. Indeed, author Caleb Carr has written:

As long as the Western allies treat those Afghans who strive for progress as political and moral equals, and accepts the responsibility that years of abusive behaviour ranging from British imperialism to Soviet expansionism to CIA meddling have incurred, precedent suggests that those troubles will be surmounted.<sup>74</sup>

This "acceptance of responsibility" should not mean anything other than continuing to attempt to ameliorate the situation. This can be done through effective use of diplomacy and development, gaining an understanding of the conditions which lead to the rise of the Taliban, and holding firm in our resolve to honour our commitments to solve the problems. As was argued, our first step here needs to be in the provision of education. As Dr. Sean Maloney has stated:

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We fight them with schools, education, information, ideas, confidence, individual self-reliance, and overwhelming force on tap when needed.<sup>75</sup>

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## About the Author...

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## Endnotes

1. Some will argue that the Taliban are "state-based" in that they briefly held power in Afghanistan and formed an internationally recognized state power. This position is inherently weak, in that recognition was offered by only three other states within the international arena, and because (as will be shown) the Taliban were initially formed on a tribal basis, and were later augmented by recruits from numerous different states. Additionally, their activities lack the sanction of any state while concurrently being conducted across international borders.
2. Accessed on 22 June 2007 at <http://www.pnm.my/mtcp/images/maps/Afghanistan-map.jpg>
3. For complete general details, it is recommended that the reader see the *Afghanistan Country Handbook*. (United States Department of Defence. *Afghanistan Country Handbook*. Np: Government Printing Office, October 2003).
4. *Afghanistan Country Handbook*, 59.
5. For a more detailed synopsis of the Afghan-Soviet War, and indeed the tumultuous history of the country from its formation, Victoria Scholfield's work *Afghan Frontier: Feuding and Fighting in Central Asia* (Victoria Scholfield, *Afghan Frontier: Feuding and Fighting in Central Asia* (London: Taurus Park, 2003)) is highly recommended.
6. Kathy Gannon, *I is for Infidel: From Holy War to Holy Terror: 18 Years Inside Afghanistan* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 9.
7. Barnett R. Rubin, "Afghanistan Under the Taliban." *Current History* (February 1999): 80.
8. David B. Edwards, *Before Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 272.
9. Barnett R. Rubin, 80.
10. Gannon, 25.
11. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 25.
12. Charles Allen, *God's Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Roots of Modern Jihad* (London: Abacus, 2006), 290.
13. *Ibid*, 3.
14. *Ibid*, 4.
15. Gannon, 27-29.
16. Barnett R. Rubin, 79.
17. John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16.
18. Michael Rubin, "Who is Responsible for the Taliban?" *Middle East Review of International Affairs*. (Volume 6, Number 1, March 2002): 9. Accessed on 20 June 2007 at <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/2002/issue1/jv6n1a1.html>.
19. John C. Griffiths, *Afghanistan: A History of Conflict* (London: Carlton Books, 2001), 227.
20. *Ibid*.
21. Burnett R. Rubin, 80.
22. Gannon, 86.
23. Burnett R. Rubin, 79-80.
24. *Ibid*.
25. A complete account of this incident is beyond the scope or aims of this paper. Interested readers are strongly encouraged to read Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars* (Coll, Steve. *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. New York: Penguin, 2005).
26. Michael Ignatieff, *Empire Lite: Nation-Building in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan* (Toronto: Penguin, 2003), 86.
27. *Ibid*.
28. Rashid, 13.
29. Burnett R. Rubin, 80.
30. Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilisation: The Conquest of the Middle East*. (London: Harper Collins, 2005), 31.
31. Rashid, 32.
32. Esposito, 17.
33. Edwards, 294.
34. Gannon, 33.
35. Allen, 274.
36. Michael Rubin, 13.
37. Allen, 275.

38. Rashid, 88.
39. Esposito, 110.
40. Burnett R. Rubin, 81-82.
41. The use of reason to create innovation in sharia in response to new conditions. From Burnett R. Rubin, 82.
42. *Ibid*, 82.
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44. Esposito, 16.
45. Allen, 21.
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65. Colonel Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (St Paul, Minnesota: Zenith Press, 2004), 2.
66. Sean Maloney for example has argued that they have fought in urban centres "using terrorist tactics." See Maloney, 166.
67. As based on the author's personal experiences within Afghanistan as the Deputy Commanding Officer of the 1 PPCLI Battle Group from February to August 2006 in the Kandahar Province.
68. Again, based on personal experiences fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan.
69. Gannon, 56.
70. Note, I am not arguing for eradication of poppy without both financial incentive and an alternative crop; to do so is akin to arming the farmer and pointing him in the direction of the closest coalition base.
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# TOMORROW'S FIREPOWER

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**Captain Ian A. McGregor**

The current doctrine on firepower employment<sup>1</sup> is generally still sound, but a few deficiencies create a temptation to substitute other concepts for portions of the doctrine. Further, current doctrine may contribute to a "tendency to simply upgrade existing systems and/or replace platforms with newer versions"<sup>2</sup> because the doctrinal divisions of firepower are not capability and effects focused. Since the Army is pursuing several major projects that will deliver or incorporate new firepower systems, now is an appropriate time to modernize firepower doctrine in the Canadian Forces so that it may play its "vital role"<sup>3</sup> in determining appropriate structure and equipment.

Modernisation of firepower doctrine does not require sweeping changes. Building from the existing concepts of organic firepower and fire support, the Army can transition to more descriptive concepts of close fire and far fire. The 1999 Firepower doctrine can be made more relevant as the Army grows toward the future by drawing on lessons from current operational experience and building on doctrinal changes of the last five years. In getting to this revised doctrine, it is important to look at the lessons of the Army today.

## **Current Operational Lessons**

In February 2006, the 1 PPCLI Battle Group (known as Task Force ORION) took control of the Kandahar Province from the American TF GUN DEVIL. This marked the start of much higher intensity combat operations in that area. There have now been three BGs to complete tours during this new phase, and a fourth BG is nearing the end of its tour. Combat lessons are validating or correcting many assumptions about current and potential operational environments and concepts.

We have met the enemy and in many ways found the asymmetric foe we had anticipated. The enemy does attempt to hide in the civilian community, to strike only under favourable conditions, to use constricting terrain and to disengage when a position becomes untenable. Yet, even in this environment, our soldiers still require the ability to fight in a conventional context. The enemy will carefully establish fighting positions with interlocking fields of fire, depth positions, and cut-off locations. Kill zones will be established so that the massed fire of RPG, PKM and AK-47 achieve the maximum effects on ambushed coalition forces.

This enemy is being fought in what is being described as "complex terrain." This is repeatedly seen to be a dense network of walled compounds connected with trails and passageways, deep irrigation ditches, and dense vineyards. Both 1 PPCLI BG and 1 RCR BG have identified that, despite the rural nature of the ground, tactics, techniques and procedures developed for urban combat are proving to be applicable and very effective. Other long established and well understood basic war fighting tenets remain applicable to the COE (Contemporary Operating Environment). The notions of fire and movement, flank security, use of cut-offs in the attack and fighting out of an ambush were specifically mentioned as remaining relevant. In counter insurgency, the fundamentals of combat have not changed at the section, platoon or company level.

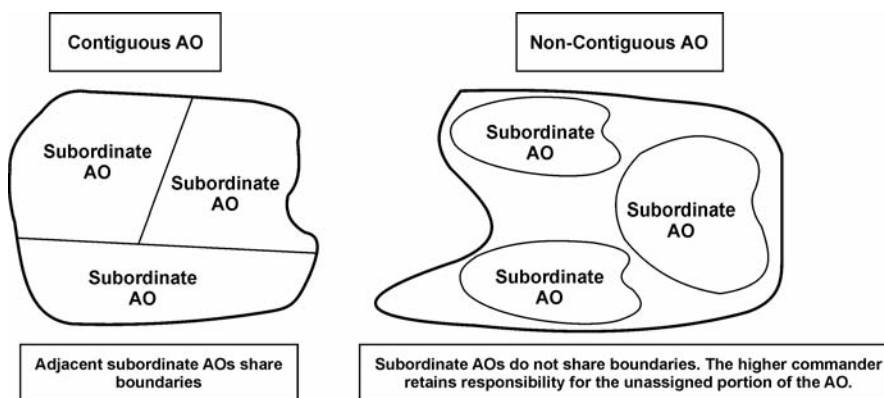
The fundamentals have also been validated in more conventional fights. In Pashmul, the Taliban attempted a conventional stand. The determined enemy sited entrenched fighting positions and used IEDs covered by direct fire to deny wheeled

routes. To defeat this enemy 1 RCR, on Op MEDUSA, resorted to several more conventional means. Breaches were created with heavy armoured bulldozers covered by air and artillery fires and victory was finally secured through a systematic clearance of the objective by dismounted infantry. This battle was seen to confirm that a conventional fight requires conventional tools.<sup>4</sup> In short order, a squadron of Leopard C2 main battle tanks were deployed into Afghanistan. These tanks have since had their influence impact across Kandahar province. They have proven effective at troop or squadron level, but always in a combined arms setting. In fact, the necessity of combined arms in the delivery of decisive combat power is another fundamental which has been revalidated in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

The apparent difference in tactics is in the scale at which they are applied. In the contemporary operating environment, the smallest effective combat group is the platoon, and battles are typically platoon fights. However, even in the platoon fight, the company headquarters is intimately involved in order to coordinate the wide array of higher combat enablers that are available. The company headquarters must be prepared to coordinate its own airspace and employ available artillery, close air support (CAS), attack helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles. Therefore, while so many of the traditional ways and means have been validated in combat, new methods have also shown their merit.

## Adaptive Dispersed Operations

Successful evolution is seen in the trend of devolving capability to lower levels while expanding the size of areas of operations (AOs) at each level of command. This success is developed in the Army's most recent concept described in *Land Operations 2021: Adaptive Dispersed Operations (ADO)*. *Land Ops 2021* seeks to "create and sustain operational advantage over adept, adaptive adversaries through the employment of adaptive land forces alternatively dispersing and aggregating throughout the multi-dimensional battlespace."<sup>6</sup> To do this the Army "requires land forces that are agile, capable of delivering both lethal and non-lethal effects, network-enabled, multipurpose, and full spectrum capable."<sup>7</sup>



The Army of Tomorrow: Assessing Concepts and Capabilities for Land Operations Evolution. May 2006

### Contiguous and Non-Contiguous Areas of Operation

This force will be employed in an environment in contemporary and future operating environments where the linear battlefield is likely to remain the exception. The concepts of "deep" and "rear" will be largely irrelevant as non-contiguous AOs become the norm. Instead, the vast spaces between dispersed forces will become one large contested zone that is simultaneously deep and rear. While not stated as such, ADO particularly balances two principles of war, *economy of effort* and *concentration of force*, in order to

dominate the much larger and more complex battlespace with smaller dispersed forces that rapidly aggregate to achieve surprise and mass for decisive victories against the enemy at key times and places. This flexible concept is applicable to fighting a conventional war against a modern aggregated force, and to fighting a counter insurgency against an adaptive dispersed foe.

Despite increased outputs, ADO imposes new challenges that can already be seen in dispersed operations in Afghanistan. The dispersed element is no longer able to rely on concentration of force or mutual support to achieve the mission and to survive. Instead, each dispersed element requires its own greater ability to act in the evolving situation.

The operational function Act is a merging of the old combat functions of manoeuvre, firepower and information operations into one overarching concept with emphasis on the physical and moral effects as opposed to the means.<sup>8</sup> Act emphasises not only effects but also their synchronization and precision. The Army's force employment concept develops the concept of synchronization with the vision of networked fighting systems operating in harmony across the battlespace.<sup>9</sup> This operational function is fine as a guiding principle for tactical and operational application, but for the development of a capability it is helpful to drill back down to lower concepts like firepower. Then keeping operational experience in mind, we can ask how the CF should envision firepower within the context of ADO and which changes we should be making today.



Photo Source: DGLFPM

A well rounded close fire system could be seen in a LAV III Company Group including Mobile Gun System, Armoured Mortar System, Missiles, and long range sensing.

## Firepower

Firepower is employed to destroy, neutralize, suppress or harass the enemy; its effects are employed from the strategic level down to the tactical level; and it achieves the greatest results when coordinated with other battlefield activities such as manoeuvre.<sup>10</sup> The application of firepower is a joint endeavour, and it brings together organic firepower and fire support (field artillery, naval gunfire, aviation, and CAS).

One of firepower doctrine's strengths is the well established emphasis on effect as opposed to means. "The application of firepower should be judged solely by the effect required on the enemy in terms of destruction, neutralization or suppression and in shaping the enemy. This prompts consideration of the volume, duration, and lethality of

fire and the precision and range of munitions. The appropriate mix of weapons systems can therefore be chosen to achieve the desired effect.”<sup>11</sup> Put into other terms, “each weapon is used according to its characteristics” and “weapons are used to complement rather than counteract each other.”<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately the doctrinal splitting of firepower into organic and fire support fails to provide an adequate structure on which to plan a firepower system of complementary weapons. The categories are incongruently defined, impose unnecessary cognitive constraints, and (in the case of organic firepower) lack definition. Organic fire is defined by its organizational position while fire support is defined by a role. This creates an absurd situation in which mortars in a fire base could simultaneously be organic fire and fire support, and at the same time a long range precision artillery system destroying high value targets (HVTs) identified by advanced sensor capabilities would be neither organic fire nor fire support. A fall-out of this incongruence is that cognitive limitations may be imposed on the employment of weapons. Despite the categories, organic fire may be used for fire support as seen by tanks or machine guns forming a firebase, and fire support may be called to produce effects which are ends in themselves as seen in the long range destruction of HVTs. However, these are small problems which most soldiers are capable of seeing beyond. The greatest weakness of “organic” and “fire support” as terms is the failure to fully define a doctrine for organic firepower. In all, one sentence and three short paragraphs are dedicated to the topic as compared to the one chapter plus two books which are dedicated to fire support.<sup>13</sup>



Photo Source: TF 3-06, R22AR Coy

**The Leopard C2 expanded the close fire capability of mechanized forces in Afghanistan**

The failure of the terms “organic” and “fire support” has resulted in their frequently being supplanted by “direct” and “indirect” as doctrinal constructs. This is seen in the direct fire system,<sup>14</sup> direct fire regiment,<sup>15</sup> future indirect fire capability (FIFC),<sup>16</sup> and even the role of artillery to assist in the defeat of the enemy with indirect fire as part of the all arms battle.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, “direct”<sup>18</sup> and “indirect”<sup>19</sup> focus on the means of aiming or delivering munitions onto targets and they do nothing to define roles or effects from which to design a capability. Compounding the problem of “direct” and “indirect” is that the “traditional division between direct and indirect fire is becoming less meaningful.”<sup>20</sup>

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Even new terminology fails to re-establish the distinction. Line of sight (LOS) and non-line of sight (NLOS) are terms near analogous to direct and indirect, while beyond line of sight (BLOS) has been introduced to encompass a whole spectrum of non-ballistic trajectories, around obstacle capabilities, and direct fire behind the next ridgeline.<sup>21</sup> Yet, dual role weapons further break-down the direct/indirect blurring. Short range high explosive direct fire engagements are possible with breach loading turreted mortar systems, such as Delco AMS, AMOS, and the FCS NLOS mortar. Tank Extended Range Munitions (TERM) and now Medium Range Munitions (MRM) are introducing a 9 km beyond line of sight fire capability for tanks.<sup>22</sup> Even dismounted crew served weapons are blurring this distinction with weapons such as the Close Area Suppression Weapon (CASW). The precision, accuracy and reach of all families of weapon systems is drastically improved with things such as gliding munitions, self-navigating munitions, and discriminating munitions. Clearly, “direct” and “indirect” are less suitable as doctrinal constructs than organic fire and fire support.

A solution would be for the Army to adopt a new vernacular that would provide doctrine with a construct to communicate around the blurred direct/indirect paradigm, while also better expressing the contribution of various entities of the dispersed or aggregated force. The problem of incongruent definitions and cognitive limitations can be overcome by adopting a construct that divides firepower along the same operational regimes as Act.<sup>23</sup> This could be done by redefining the division of organic fire as close fire and placing this within the close regime,<sup>24</sup> and redefining the division of fire support to far fire and placing this within the extended regime.<sup>25</sup> The concept of fire support would remain not as a division of firepower but as a task that may be assigned to any weapon system for either a specific objective or as a standing principal task. Further definition of close and far fire would reflect evolutions in technology and better align firepower doctrine with the concept of ADO.

## Far Fire

Far fire is the evolution of the land and maritime surface-to-surface component of existing fire support doctrine. Part of an overall Joint Fire System,<sup>26</sup> far fire is an operational level resource capable of delivering long range lethal and non-lethal effects in a direct or supporting role. In comparison to current artillery doctrine, the role of far fire is to destroy the enemy with far reaching fire as part of the all arms battle. Far fire will be defined by one key characteristic.

Reach is the characteristic ability to project effects out to significant distances from one's position. In some cases, such as airmobile infantry and attack aviation, the characteristic of reach is provided by a platform. Yet both airmobile infantry and attack aviation are close fire capabilities. Far fire's reach is derived from the weapon systems themselves. It is this characteristic that allows far fire to provide fire to deep, close, and rear operations as described in *Firepower*.

However in the more common instances, where friendly forces will be faced with vast contested areas between isolated areas of close operations, far fire will contribute to operational pervasive fire capabilities. Through coordinated movement of far fire elements and higher assets such as long-loiter strike UAV, the operational commander will have the ability to immediately put precise effective fire onto anything within the relevant AO. Pervasive fire will compensate for lacking mutual support and help ensure dispersed TF elements will have available the overmatching firepower against likely encountered enemy that is required for ADO.

Land based far fire systems, the field artillery, will contribute to pervasive fire through an ability to disperse below the traditional battery level, as is already being done



in the COE,<sup>27</sup> in order to support operations and contribute to pervasive fire through a non-contiguous AO. At the same time, the capability to aggregate to the battery level, physically or in effects, must be retained to support aggregated close operations. The traditional fundamentals of artillery employment<sup>28</sup> will generally remain the same for far fire; coordination, flexibility and economy of effort will all continue to define use of far fire. However, precision effects will supplant concentration of force as a fundamental. Massed fire may still be called for particularly at times when mission units or sub-units aggregate to conduct decisive operations, but in general “combat power is fundamentally shifting from mass to precision and agility”<sup>29</sup> and even where mass is required it must go hand-in-hand with precision.



Photo Source: Combat Camera

Leopard 2A6 in Kandahar

Far fire is a decisive element in the COE through fire to deep, close and rear operations. With the additional role of contributing to pervasive fire, future far fire systems will be key enablers of the ADO concept. Unfortunately, even with overwhelming fire support, the operational experience in Afghanistan has proven that there is and will continue to be a requirement to close with and destroy the enemy. That close destruction is executed through the employment of close fire.

## Close Fire

Close fire is an evolution of organic firepower, which is the capability integral to a manoeuvre element. Organic firepower includes “small arms, machine guns, vehicle mounted cannons, grenade launchers, anti-armour weapons, mortars and tank guns.”<sup>30</sup> Close fire encompasses the integration of manoeuvre LOS, NLOS and new BLOS capabilities into a complete system for the close destruction of the enemy. Close fire enables those arms that “close with and destroy the enemy,”<sup>31&32</sup> and close fire enable all arms to defeat the enemy that attempts to engage in a close fight.

Unlike descriptions of organic firepower, it would be too limiting to think of close fire as primarily direct fire (or LOS). The path of the ammunition between launcher and target is irrelevant. A close fire system is characterized by the following:

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**Effects Oriented.** A complete close fire capability is provided by a suite of weapons capable of achieving all required target effects at all required ranges in spite of obstacles. These effects are both lethal and non-lethal, and they encompass destroy, suppress, neutralize and disrupt. No single weapon will meet all these needs against all targets and so a complete close fire capability must be a system of systems. The effectiveness of a close fire system is assessed at the aggregate level where all systems contribute to the capability required for a manoeuvre force to engage a spectrum of possible targets.

**Multi-purpose.** Isolated close fire systems must avoid unnecessary over-specialization. Single purpose missile systems, such as the LOSAT, which serves only to put a kinetic energy dart through a heavy main battle tank, must be avoided as their usefulness depends on the presence of a specific target. Instead, close fire missile systems should have multifunction warheads or employ a common launcher to fire a family of missiles. Many simpler and proven systems achieve the multi-purpose effect already: Tank cannons can fire HESH, HEAT, Sabot, and Canister; the TOW can fire top-attack anti-armour or bunker buster missiles; and the LAV III can fire Sabot, Frang, and HEI-T. The key to multi-purpose is a weapon compatible with a family of ammunition and a basic load that can be mission tailored.

**Multi-means.** "Using a combination of weapon systems to complicate the opponent's response is always desirable."<sup>33</sup> To provide redundancy against the enemy developing a protection against effects our forces wish to achieve, close fire must have multiple means of achieving an effect. In a simple form, a mixture of kinetic and chemical energy weapons provides multi-means for the destruction of armour. However, multi-means also includes ensuring the ability to engage LOS, NLOS and BLOS in order to engage both the enemy that is exposed and enemy that is using ground for protection from fire; complete close fire systems will include a mix of delivery means to allow flexibility when differing ranges and obstacles to fire are encountered. Multi-means requires the enemy to adopt TTPs and equipment to protect against all our means of engagement. Failing this, the enemy will be forced to accept risk in weaknesses that we can then exploit.

**Stand-off.** When possible, close fire systems will allow the destruction of the enemy at ranges too far for reactionary fire. At its simplest, this is analogous to using LAV cannon fire destroying platoons of Taliban in the open while the Taliban are unable to respond with their man-portable weapons. Stand-off also includes reaching around and behind obstacles to destroy the enemy. Thus, a complete close fire capability will allow a manoeuvre unit to decisively engage the enemy not only to the next ridge line, but also beyond the next ridge line and around the corner.

**Fit for the bayonet charge.** While close fire attempts to improve survivability by destroying the enemy at ranges too far for reactionary fire, it must be recognized that a final up-close and intimate moment may be required to confirm or complete the destruction. Further, in the battlespace of today and the future there is no place of guaranteed security. Therefore, every close fire system must be fit to participate in the assault and to fight through an ambush.

**Network Enabled.** The integration with a mobile battlefield network system (MBNS) is one of the most critical elements of the close fire capability. As not all weapon systems achieve all possible target effects, a MBNS will enable any sensor to immediately queue an appropriate weapon onto a target. This would be like adding a hunter-killer sight capability which is external to the individual fighting platform. It is this component which will extend the reach of close fire to allow the rapid and aggressive engagement of enemy outside the line of sight.

One final element which will characterise specific close fire systems is their platform. Platforms range from one or two soldiers carrying weapons up to AFVs and helicopters. These platforms are critical as they enable manoeuvre in close with the enemy. Interestingly, if one looks at the two close fire arms, infantry and armour, there are four characteristics in common and three of these must be balanced in development of the platform. Mobility, firepower and survivability<sup>34</sup> must be balanced in each close fire platform. This concept, already established in AFV design,<sup>35</sup> can be shown to be applicable to soldiers as well. Increasing a soldier's body armour will reduce mobility or limit the amount of firepower which can be carried. Therefore, it is unlikely that all the capabilities required of a close fire system can be carried by a single omni-purpose platform without unacceptably sacrificing survivability or mobility. Instead, capabilities will have to be dispersed across a family of platforms consequently requiring that platforms be considered in the design of a close fire system

Within the Army, there exist two close fire systems grouped around broad platform types: dismounted close fire and mounted close fire. A brief examination of these forms will draw out the significance of a system level view to designing a close fire system.



Photo Source: Combat Camera

M777 provides a far fire capability in Afghanistan

## Dismounted Close Fire

In the concept and design phases, it is important that close fire be considered as a system as opposed to a collection of assorted weapons. Students of the Land Forces Technical Staff Course are regularly presented with anecdotal evidence that the Advanced Lightweight Anti-Armour Weapon System (ALAAWS) project suffered as a result of the Army's inability to express a coherent dismountable anti-armour concept which showed a need for ALAAWS alongside TOW and the relatively new Eryx. While this judgement may be over-harsh, it is clear that ALAAWS approvals did demand an Army direct fire concept. A better illustration of the need for a system view can be found in the dismounted close fire capability.

The dismounted close fire capability is all individual and crewed weapons which can be found in a dismounted infantry company. It is also every dismountable weapon in an

armoured squadron, administration company or MP platoon. In the planned future, dismounted close fire will be transformed under several projects: Small Arms Replacement Project II (SARP II), Advanced Lightweight Anti-Armour Weapon System (ALAAWS) and Close Area Suppression Weapon (CASW). SARP II recognises its scope to include “the pistol, C7 Assault Rifle and associated grenade launcher, C8 Carbine, C9 Light Machine Gun (LMG), C6 General Purpose Machine Gun (GPMG), .50 cal Heavy Machine Gun (HMG) and other special purpose small arms.” While SARP II will take a system view of a portion of the dismounted close fire capability, a better more comprehensive view is possible.



Photo Source: Combat Camera

**Close and far fire will achieve greatest effects when fed information through greater sensing capabilities. Skylark and company UAVs are a step in this direction**

Consider that area suppression can be accomplished with machine guns, automatic grenade launchers (ALGs), things in between—the American XM307 Advanced Crew-Served Weapon (ACSW)—and light mortars. Currently there are strong objections within the Infantry Corps to replacing the 60 mm mortars with the CASW despite a comparison of the two weapons which found that in isolation the CASW met far more capability requirements than the 60 mm. The system view would compare aggregate results of platoons and companies incorporating rifles, LMGs, GPMGs, HMGs, VHMGs/ACSWs, AGLs, missiles and light mortars. Only analysis conducted by varying the weapon systems at this aggregate level is able to determine which combination of weapons is optimal and which weapons are essential. Also drawn out of this aggregate analysis are conclusions on force structure such as location and numbers of designated marksmen.

Therefore, SARP II should be prepared to examine the full suite of dismounted close fire systems even if it will not replace all such weapons. This will ensure essential capabilities are not “traded off” and that we are not replacing weapon types one for one when it would make more senses to replace two systems for three newer systems (or vice versa).

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## Mounted Close Fire

Mounted Close Fire will be the combat team integral heavy fire capability. Close fire will allow combat team commanders to destroy targets at much greater stand-off ranges, and to destroy targets protected behind cover or beyond terrain features. The full potential of the close fire capability will be realized through integration with a mobile battlefield network system (MBNS) for network enabled sensing and targeting. All platforms will be able to queue more appropriate close fire systems onto detected targets via a target handoff over the MBNS. An infantry fighting vehicle which identifies several enemy tanks would electronically designate those targets to the MBNS which would make friendly tank commanders fully aware and able to engage the unseen enemy with BLOS munitions. But, the technology for this inter-vehicle hunter/killer capability may still be a handful of years from maturity.

In the meantime, the close fire concept can still allow for incremental developments in current capabilities, and structures for these incremental developments will still remain relevant once a functioning MBNS is fielded. As an example, the introduction of an MBNS will greatly increase the lethality and reach of an infantry company group but it will not likely change the mix of weapons required. The ability to destroy infantry, infantry fighting vehicles, UAV and fortifications will still be required. The ability to engage and destroy heavy armour in self defence will continue to be required. Finally the ability to achieve the previous effects must not be impaired by obstacles to fire such as steep terrain changes or infrastructure. Much of this is already provided in the LAV III but not the ability to defeat heavy armour or heavy fortifications. Tanks achieve this, but tanks do not exist in sufficient quantity to form a combat team with every company. Therefore an alternate missile or cannon system is likely required for company groups. To resolve the issue of obstacles to fire, a company group could include a low velocity cannon (or turret mortar systems) capable of engaging at high elevations over obstacles or engaging short range direct fire where constricted terrain would limit the traverse of traditional tank cannons.

## Developing Close and Far Fire

To some the far fire concept may sound like just a new label on field artillery and naval gunfire. Those same observers would argue that “close fire” is simply a new label on organic firepower. These observers may be mostly correct as this new firepower model breaks little if any new ground. In fact, the concepts of close and far fire can be implemented with relatively little effort and no significant impact on our employment of forces today. The change in thinking would primarily affect equipment acquisition and development of force structures for tomorrow and the future.

Supporting the incremental evolution of the field force is input from the Canadian Forces Experimentation Centre and the Army Experimentation Centre (DLSE 4). The Joint Fires Support (JFS) Technology Demonstration Program (TDP), run through CFEC, will define a concept to enable coordinated fire support—utilizing capability from all services—that will be responsive to immediate fire requests and allow all services to designate and prioritize targets and allocate fire requests.<sup>36</sup> While not using the terminology, the JFS TDP is effectively already mandated to develop the far fire concept in a joint context. At the same time, DLSE 4 will be completing Army Experiment 9 (AE9) (Army of Tomorrow) and launching AE10 (Force 2021) and AE11 (Army of the Future). These simulations will look at force employment concepts from platoon to formation level and should provide relevant information for both close and far fire. Using Limited Objective Experiment (LOE) 0201 Combat Support Weapons Mix as a template, DLSE 4 could derive several useful conclusions toward determining an optimum close fire



system. However, the development of close fire would require simulation scenarios to encompass the full spectrum of operations against conventional and asymmetric enemies. By varying the weapons mix within scenarios, better close fire systems can be narrowed down for final validation in the field.



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Traditionally seen as characteristic and competing factors in AFV design, firepower, mobility and survivability must be balanced in the development of all close fire systems including the soldier.

In many cases this firepower concept reinforces a downward diffusion of capabilities. Not only does an infantry company require a NLOS capability to support its machine guns at full range but the combat team also requires some heavier NLOS capability to support tank fire at full range. Thus both light and medium mortars can be seen as a key element of the sub-unit close fire system. Rocket and missile artillery are doctrinally described as division to corps assets,<sup>37</sup> yet far fire will increasingly call on such systems to provide brigade commanders with pervasive fire through the contested zones of a non-contiguous AO. This downward diffusion of capability is only one light in which this firepower concept must be viewed.

## Future Fire

Together, close and far fire must be viewed within their place in the larger operational functions because there are reciprocal implications between firepower and other doctrinal constructs, both in terms of requirements and definition. Firepower is an element of Act and so firepower produces synergies when integrated with other capabilities that can achieve effects.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, "Act is tightly linked to the functions of Command and Sense."<sup>39</sup> Therefore, firepower will depend on the MBNS, Sensor Fusion and Knowledge Management<sup>40</sup> to accelerate the time from detection to kill. To accelerate time to detection, improved sensing must also allow detection and identification of targets in places we cannot see today. This will place greater emphasis on distributed autonomous systems,<sup>41</sup> UAVs and other integral systems. Therefore, firepower with Command and Sense will aim toward very rapid detection and immediate engagement by the most appropriate system.

Viewed within Act and surrounded by the remaining operational functions, the close and far fire concepts provide a doctrinal construct that is more relevant to current operations and ADO than are distinctions based on direct and indirect or on organic and support. As a whole, these new concepts do not represent a radical departure from current thinking, but they do provide a better approach for force development through a systems approach to looking at fleets of weapon systems. Lessons from Afghanistan are incorporated with future concepts to stress stand-off detection and engagement of the enemy with a close final destruction. If implemented today, the change in terminology would not greatly impact the soldier on the ground. However the small impact on planners would result in significant improvements delivered incrementally (through projects such as SARP II, FFCV, and FIFC) for the soldier of tomorrow.

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## About the Author...

Captain McGregor joined the Canadian Forces in Oct 1997 with 31 CER (The Elgins) of St Thomas Ontario. He served there for five years completing the RESO program and holding positions including troop commander and squadron 2ic. In 2002, on graduation from University of Western Ontario with a BESC, he was briefly employed as G3 Plans of 31 CBG until his transfer to the Regular Force. Capt McGregor was posted to 1 CER in the spring of 2003. While with the regiment, he was employed as the Armoured Engineer Troop Commander and a Squadron Operations Officer. In this later role Capt McGregor deployed on Op ARCHER with 11 Field Squadron as part of Task Force ORION. On his return to Canada, in the summer of 2006, he went into the Army Technical Staff Program. After graduation he was posted to Ottawa where he is employed within Director Combat Support Equipment Management.

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# THE ARMED PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANY AND THE CANADIAN FORCES: THE NEXT STEP IN CONTRACTOR SUPPORT?

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Major Shane Gifford, CD

This article briefly examines a number of central issues related to the use of armed contractors by the Canadian Forces (CF), and posits that these firms could be employed successfully by the CF. A brief history of CF contractor support demonstrates a trend similar to events in other western militaries and that the next potential step will be the introduction of armed private contractors in support of CF activities abroad. The twin demands of high operational tempo and CF expansion have placed enormous demands on the CF. However, trends in the Canadian population demonstrate that the CF will remain short of personnel for the foreseeable future and that armed private military contractors may provide a solution to this demographic crisis. Finally, it is argued that the CF could successfully employ armed contractors in support of operations by redressing the current contractor-client relationship and ensuring that armed contractors are in the direct military chain of command, that they be considered militia for legal purposes, and that they are primarily employed on tasks that are considered defensive in nature. A number of recommendations are made, including the promulgation of doctrine, further research into the exact legal mechanisms for employing armed private contractors, exercising the concept during high readiness training of Land units, and further research into the moral and ethical implications.

## Military Contractors

"There are some countries that use private security firms because they either don't have soldiers—or don't want to use their soldiers for those tasks...I've seen them operating in certain parts of the world, when I was in Croatia and in Bosnia and elsewhere. And I'm very glad to tell you I do not believe it's the Government of Canada's intent to ever employ such individuals—armed individuals—carrying out what essentially I believe are soldier's tasks."<sup>1</sup>

Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie

With these comments, the current Commander Land Force Command (Chief of the Land Staff) seemed to be drawing a "line in the sand" with regard to the use of military contractors in an armed role for the CF. General Leslie was commenting on the Army's recent decision to outsource some training, such as driving courses for armoured vehicle crews and other non-combat related instruction to reservists and civilians.<sup>2</sup> The demands of the war in Afghanistan meant that junior officers and non-commissioned officers were in short supply to fulfill the training missions. Private industry stood ready and willing to fill in.

On the surface, this view of the armed private military industry might appear justified. The conflict in Iraq has seen an explosion of private military contractors operating in the battlespace with US and coalition soldiers, Iraqi Army and police, Sunni and Shia insurgents and suspected terrorists. Exact figures on the number of private contractors operating inside Iraq vary, but at its height in 2003 it is estimated that

somewhere between 20,000 to 30,000 contractors were operating in the country.<sup>3</sup> This growth has been exponential. The first Gulf War saw the ratio between US soldiers and contractors at approximately 50:1. By the second Gulf War that ratio had increased dramatically to 10:1.<sup>4</sup> These contractors span the spectrum of services provided by the industry, from reconstruction to consulting, advising, support services, logistics and training. Some of these services involve the use of armed private contractors. These companies are not just hired to carry out tasks on behalf of private industry operating in Iraq. A substantial amount of work involves contracts with US government agencies such as the State Department and the Department of Defense. These departments, ill-equipped and undermanned to operate in the counter-insurgency climate of Iraq, have turned to private firms to fill the void.<sup>5</sup>



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The purpose of this paper is to examine the main issues related to the use of armed contractors by the CF and argue that the CF could successfully employ them in operations. The industry will be described, along with definitions of the various types of companies currently operating in the market, and a working definition will be provided for those firms that provide armed contractors—the military provider firm. To provide sufficient background, a brief history of the private military industry will be explored. Then, the various reasons for the post-Cold War explosion of the industry will be examined. A brief history of CF contractor support will be reviewed, including the Canadian Contractor Augmentation Program (CANCAP). The recent Land Force decision to contract out some basic occupation training, once considered a core military function, reflects other western armies' experiences. It will be argued that the use of armed contractors is simply the next step in a path that other western nations have already gone down. The demographic challenges facing the CF and Canada as a whole will be examined. It will be shown that the CF will, for the foreseeable future, remain short of personnel to do all things being demanded of it by governments that have demonstrated a willingness to continually employ the CF. Armed private military contractors may provide a solution to this demographic crisis. Finally, the legal issues surrounding the use of armed contractors will be explored. Despite some challenges and limitations, it will be argued that there are methods that can be employed that would



allow the CF to legally employ armed contractors in support of operations. The CF could successfully employ armed contractors in support of operations by redressing the current contractor-client relationship and ensuring that armed contractors are in the direct military chain of command, that they be considered militia for legal purposes, and that they are primarily employed on tasks that are considered defensive in nature.

## Private Military Industry

The environment within which the private military contractor works today would likely be significantly different than that of his predecessors, but it would not be totally unrecognizable. Eugene Smith, commenting on the Italian statesman Machiavelli's thoughts on the dangers of the privatization of conflict states, "And yet conflict at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is in many ways reminiscent of the Italian philosopher's time...Niche wars, for instance, are on the rise around the globe, pitting governments and non-governmental forces against each other."<sup>6</sup> Based on this assessment, the mercenary of yesterday would feel strangely at home in the conflicts of today. The rise in the importance of non-state actors as a source of conflict has been mirrored in the growth of new private firms that participate either directly or indirectly in this new "niche" environment.



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This article will explore the rise of the private military industry. There are many firms that provide many types of services on the modern battlefield. Some key definitions and terms will first be examined. Also, the types of contractors will be reviewed, and a working definition of those types of companies that provide armed services will be devised. A historical context will be provided, including early mercenary employment examples. Then, some explanations as to why the private military industry has grown will be examined. It will be argued that the triumph of capitalist ideology and the push for privatization, a post-Cold War call for the "peace dividend," and the loss of a superpower checks and balances system on conflict, led to the emergence of the private military company.

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## Definitions

Before moving on to trying to describe the private military industry, it may be helpful to describe what it is not. Thus, it is worthwhile to define exactly what a mercenary is. A mercenary is defined by the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* as someone who is “primarily concerned with making money at the expense of ethics”; also, “a professional soldier hired to serve in a foreign army.”<sup>7</sup>

Alternatively, a number of legal definitions have arisen. Most importantly is the definition adopted under Article 47 of the *Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions* (AP 1). A mercenary is any person who:

- ◆ is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict;
- ◆ does, in fact, take a direct part in the hostilities;
- ◆ is motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and, in fact, is promised, by or on behalf of a Party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar ranks and functions in the armed forces of that party;
- ◆ is neither a national of a Party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a Party to the conflict;
- ◆ is not a member of the armed forces of a Party to the conflict; and
- ◆ has not been sent by a State which is not a Party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces.<sup>8</sup>

There are two other international conventions that provide a wider definition of the term mercenary: the Organization for African Unity (OAU, now the African Union) and its *Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism*; and the United Nations (UN) *International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries*. A recent meeting of experts in 2005 discussed, among other issues, as to whether a member of a private military company could be a mercenary under international law. The general conclusion drawn was that a person had to satisfy all six conditions of the AP 1 definition to qualify as a mercenary. Based on these criteria, it was generally agreed that private military companies do not constitute mercenaries under the definition.<sup>9</sup> What should be noted is that the definitions in the texts of AP 1, the African Union and the UN documents were aimed at eliminating the rogue mercenary active during the highly politically charged era of decolonization in Africa. These legal definitions were never meant to address the private military company as it exists today.

It is necessary, before we go any further in discussing the utility of armed contractors for the CF, in getting the right terminology to describe these companies and define exactly what a firm is that provides armed services on the battlefield. This is problematic as there are myriad definitions in the literature. However, after examining some potential definitions, one will be chosen to work with for the remainder of this essay.

Most authors seem to agree that the one critical factor distinguishing private military contractors/companies (PMCs) from their mercenary predecessors is their modern corporate business structure. Fred Schreier and Marina Caparini, in their occasional paper written for the Geneva Centre describe PMCs as hierarchically organized into incorporated and registered businesses that trade and compete openly on the international market, link to outside financial holdings, recruit more proficiently than their predecessors, and provide a wider range of military services to a greater number and

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variety of clients. This structure offers clear advantages in efficiency and effectiveness over the previous mercenary model.<sup>10</sup> These PMCs can operate as stand-alone corporate entities, or are often subsidiaries of larger corporate firms. They can function from small, basement-run operations to large, complex corporate entities.

One of the other defining characteristics of the industry is that companies/firms are not capital intensive. Most often, when these firms are contracted, they require the client to provide the equipment or procure the equipment on behalf of the client for a fee. The only real overhead for PMCs is the personnel, and even these are a relative bargain from a financial point of view. As Peter Singer points out in *Corporate Warriors*, labour is relatively cheap as PMCs draw their pool from developing world militaries where wages and prestige are generally low. Additionally, those drawn to the industry from developed militaries are lured by the possibility of combining their public pensions for military services with the wages offered by PMCs, ranging anywhere from two to ten times the salaries of military and police forces.<sup>11</sup>

Schreier and Caparini use the term PMCs to describe entities that are “business providers of professional services intricately linked to warfare—corporate bodies that specialize in the sale of military skills.”<sup>12</sup> The problem with this definition is that Schreier and Caparini go no further in breaking down the myriad companies and the services that they provide, lumping them all together under the term PMC.

Doug Brooks, president of the International Peace Operations Association, an umbrella organization for PMCs, provides a slightly different definitional structure for these corporate firms. He describes those corporations that provide military services internationally as military service providers (MSPs). He then breaks down MSPs into three subcategories. First, non-lethal service providers (NSPs) provide logistical and other services in high risk environments that the international community finds more useful than threatening. Under this definition fall companies such as Brown and Root, a major supplier of logistics support to militaries around the world. The next subcategory is the private security companies (PSCs), which Brooks describes as providers of armed protection such as industrial site protection, humanitarian aid protection and embassy protection. He distinguishes PSCs from the private security guards common in western nations by indicating that they provide a higher level of armed security, capable of defending against attacks by guerrilla forces. He emphasizes, however, that PSCs do not undertake offensive military actions. Examples of PSCs are security companies such as ArmorGroup and Wackenhut. Finally, Brooks describes private military companies (PMCs) as firms that provide services such as military training, military intelligence, and the capability to conduct offensive military operations and combat, although not all firms in this category offer offensive combat services.<sup>13</sup> Examples of such PMCs are Executive Outcomes (EO) and Sandline International, both of which both offer offensive combat capability, while a firm such as Military Professional Resources Inc (MPRI) offers passive services such as military training.

Kevin A. O'Brien, quoted in Kyle Ballard's article for the New Hampshire Institute of Politics, frames the definitions he uses within the broader context of the non-governmental military market. He describes four major subdivisions within this non-governmental market: mercenaries; private armies/militias and warlords; private security firms; and private military firms. Private security companies are defined as organized and established businesses that exist in legal and extra-legal markets. These types of companies provide such services as personnel and installation protection, security training, and “counter-industrial espionage” to corporate clients engaged in business in regions of instability or conflict.<sup>14</sup> O'Brien describes private military firms as the “ultimate evolution of all the above,” motivated by financial gain, partaking in conflict to which they are not a party, and can be found on the front lines of battle.<sup>15</sup>

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It is already clear that consensus on definitions is difficult to achieve in the community that studies the private military industry. From these three examples, the term PMC has two distinct meanings, although Brooks comes closest to describing those types of firms we are interested in, either those that provide armed guard services or are capable of providing offensive combat capabilities. However, it will be useful to explore definitions from several other authors to see if a more precise definitional model exists.

Such taxonomy of the private military industry is provided by Singer. Given the difficulty in precisely defining the industry, Singer argues that a successful typology of its components must take into account both elements of the industry's economic and military fundamentals. On the military side, Singer uses a "tip of the spear" metaphor; organizing the industry by the range of services and level of force that a firm is able to offer.<sup>16</sup> Singer takes this "tip of the spear" ordering of military units on the battlefield (strategic, operational and tactical) and applies this to the ordering and definition of private military industry, leading to three broad sectors:

◆ **Military Provider Firms (MPFs).** These firms focus on the tactical environment, providing services at the forefront of the battlespace, which may include engaging in actual fighting and/or direct command and control of field units. MPFs tend to be the most controversial sector of the private military industry because of their ability to provide direct combat services to clients. While these firms often claim to conduct less aggressive activities, such as providing security or guarding facilities, they do so in the context of providing military protection from essentially military threats in a war environment. MPFs are also generally the types of firms most targeted for external regulation given the nature of their work.

◆ **Military Consulting Firms (MCFs).** Firms that provide advisory and training services related to the operation and restructuring of a client's armed forces characterize this sector of private military industry. These firms offer strategic, operational and organizational analysis. They do not operate on the battlefield itself, but reshape the strategic and tactical environment through re-engineering the local force. Firms, such as MPRI, offer a range of consulting services to armed forces in the midst of restructuring or aiming for large increases in capability.

◆ **Military Support Firms (MSFs).** Singer describes these firms as those that provide supplementary military services. These firms provide non-lethal aid and assistance, including logistics, intelligence, technical support, supply and transportation. This has been the primary and most lucrative part of the private military industry, as many armies view the activities carried out by this sector as being non-core (i.e. non-combat), but still vital to the overall military mission. Many of these firms tend to be part of large, multi-national corporations that either have the MSF as a branch of their organization or provide similar support to private industry before branching out to the military. Examples of such firms include the American giant Haliburton and its subsidiary of Kellogg, Brown and Root, or the Canadian example of SNC Lavalin and ATCO Frontec.<sup>17</sup>

Singer acknowledges that the typology of these companies is more complex than portrayed. Many of the firms in private military industry operate along the seams of these definitions. Many also operate across more than one sub-sector. However, it is a useful definition for attempting to classify what services firms provide. Based on the definitions explored by several authors to this point, Singer's definition of the military provider firm (MPF) is the most useful to the work of this paper. MPF describes armed assistance provided to the contractor, in either the realm of combat or security style operations. No other definition explored captures the provision of these two types of services in one sub-sector. Therefore, MPF will be used for the remainder of the paper to describe the type of private military industry the CF should contemplate employing.

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## The Post Cold War Environment

This new breed of MPF now dominates the current international security landscape and will have profound implications for how states conduct armed conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This next section will describe some of the reasons these firms have burgeoned in the post-Cold War environment. This focuses on the end of competition between the two superpowers, the collapse of state interest in intervening in areas where security interest has waned, the growth of non-state actors, and the dominance of a pro-private industry mindset in western nations. Additionally, the broad changes to the nature of warfare, the expansion of global conflict, and the rise of the failed or failing state will be examined.

Most academics who have studied the rise of private security firms have developed a relatively consistent view as to the factors that have contributed to their establishment and growth. In his article "Roland Goes Corporate" Queen's University Political Studies Departmental Head Kim Richard Nossal describes five interrelated developments. The first of these factors is the demise of the superpower contest between the United States (US) and the Soviet Union. This lack of competition reduced the level of importance of national security institutions while nations sought a "peace dividend" at the end of the Cold War. Consequently, national militaries experienced a significant downsizing.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, the demise of the superpower rivalry led to the end of proxy wars and a lack of interest by both the US and the Soviet Union in regions where they had previously poured considerable resources and energy. Without a significant security competitor, the interests of the US were often now mostly commercial, with security taking a back seat.<sup>19</sup> This allowed regions such as Africa considerable leeway in pursuit of solutions to their own problems.

The third reason for the rise of private security firms can be traced to the collapse of states and the unwillingness of the superpowers to intervene. The great powers, which until 1989 would intervene with military, economic and informational might to ensure that no client regime lost its state monopoly on the use of violence, now no longer supplied these resources. However, this new era of failed and failing states has no less need for intervention and has led to private enterprises presenting a solution for hire.<sup>20</sup>

Nossal's fourth reason is tied to the expansion of opportunities for transnational actors at the end of the Cold War. It is described as the symbiotic relationship between sovereign states and transnational actors, who need each other and work together when the ends coincide. This relationship has led to expansion of non-state actors, both private and public on the international stage. The growth of private military firms can be traced to this symbiotic relationship. An example of this is the activities of the firm Executive Outcomes (EO) in Africa in the 1990s.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, Nossal describes a neo-conservative ideological climate within the western world that advocated the efficiency and effectiveness of the private sector over the public sector. This outlook applied mainly to public services such as electricity grids, waterworks and highways, but also increasingly applied to the private provision of security services vice its provision by the state.<sup>22</sup>

Other observers and scholars studying the post-Cold War growth of the private security firm provide similar reasons for the phenomenon. Peter Singer states that the rise of the private security industry "is not just a flashback to historic private military agents."<sup>23</sup> Singer is in general alignment with Nossal when describing the end of the Cold War as the seminal event in the rise of the private military industry. However, Singer also describes other factors that led to the emergence of the industry. The first is the broad changes in the nature of warfare. Singer goes on to describe a massive



increase in the levels of global conflict post-Cold War. Like Nossal, this is attributed to the collapse of the bi-polar world model. He then ascribes three patterns to this expansion of global violence: the implosion of states, the explosion of cross border conflict, and the growth of the influence of world markets. This market growth has been uneven and not shared evenly across the world, or demographically either, leading to a large segment of disaffected youth, who are the cannon fodder for organized crime, illegal economy and war.<sup>24</sup>

Another factor described by Singer is the increased role of non-state actors in violence. The loss of the monopoly on violence by states has led to a plethora of groups on the international stage, ranging from terrorist organizations to organized crime. These non-state actors have led to opportunities for private military firms, working for state agents that counter the outlaw groups, such as non-governmental organizations that operate in this complex environment.



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Singer also talks about the flood of ex-soldiers onto the private market after the peace dividend of the post-Cold War drawdown of forces. This downsizing was dramatic, with Singer arguing that militaries, worldwide, employed approximately seven million fewer soldiers than they did in 1989.<sup>25</sup> This led to an abundance of military expertise available on the open market for the private sector to use.

Along with the flood of people onto the open market, drastic downsizing also led to a flood of weapons. Not only did downsizing in militaries, such as the Soviet Union or East Germany, offer typical Warsaw Pact weapons at cut rate prices, but relatively high tech weaponry moved from the monopoly of the state into private hands. Additionally, the growth in availability of cheap, light weaponry such as AK-47s has meant that the state no longer has primary control of these means to wage war or to keep internal security. This has led to the explosion of armed non-state actors, arms dealers and brokers, of which MPFs can tap into to equip their own personnel.<sup>26</sup>

Singer also argues that the decline of the influence of government at the local level has created a climate for private security firms to flourish. The current climate of global economies, weakened state authority, and an inability to influence items that were once

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under the control of the state, have left many states unable to live up to their side of the "sovereign promise."<sup>27</sup> This has led to a large number of states, especially in the developing world, which are incredibly weak under the current state construct. Many of these failed or failing states look for outside help by hiring private military firms to carry out their responsibilities to their citizens. These states also have poorly equipped, poorly trained, corrupt militaries, with poor civilian control and oversight. These militaries often have poor command and control, poor maintenance of military equipment, and little to no strategic deployment or sustainment capability; thus, opening the door to MCFs and MSFs to fill some of these needs.

Like Nossal, Singer also describes the decline of the great powers' willingness to intervene in situations they would naturally have intervened in during the Cold War. As these regions of the world no longer fit into the calculus of great state strategies, they are left to their own devices. A different factor Singer brings to the table, however, is the retreat of the UN as a potential stabilizer in the post-Cold War. Singer attributes this to the financial strains on the UN, its lack of organization for fighting wars, and the painfully long time it takes to assemble and deploy a peacekeeping force. Additionally, while regional security organizations have to some degree demonstrated potential to replace the UN as a security guarantor, their focus within their region and limited deployment and sustainment capabilities have opened a window for private security firms to fill the vacuum.<sup>28</sup>

Singer's second criterion is described as the transformation in the nature of warfare. He argues that a state previously required a massive army with large numbers of machinery and equipment to take full advantage. However, changes in the nature of warfare and technology means small groups can now wield huge military power. Singer attributes these changes to several things. The first is the loss of state monopoly on military power. Changes in technology and the financial capacity of organizations other than states to raise and equip armies had allowed well-financed non-state actors to act or contract out their actions. The change in technology has meant that MSFs have now become the leader in technologies, other than weapons, which have military applications such as global positioning systems, satellites, information warfare, etc.<sup>29</sup>

The next factor in the transformation of warfare is the requirement to rely on the private sector for increasingly complex technical expertise. In fact, in such areas as informational warfare, private companies may be superior to their military counterparts. Also, weapons systems have become so complex that the ability of state militaries to repair and service them with qualified uniformed personnel requires huge financial and training outlays. Thus, the expertise of MSFs is highly sought and readily provided by the private sector.

## **The Canadian Forces and Private Military Industry**

When examining the possibility of the use of MPFs in support of CF operations, it is worthwhile to examine the recent history of contractor support and assistance. Two recent examples are particularly noteworthy. The first is the more traditional MSF sector of logistics support in the form of the Canadian Contractor Augmentation Program (CANCAP). The second is the relatively newer field of support to training through engagement of MCFs, which support initiatives such as the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program. Finally, the Canadian Army has also engaged MCFs to provide elements of basic recruit training to its soldiers. A quick review of these three programs will support the argument that Canada, like many other western militaries, is following a similar path in terms of engaging private military industry in support of the state. This engagement commenced with the employment of MSFs, followed by the handing over of limited training responsibility to MCFs. The next logical step will be the

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contracting of MPFs to provide armed services to the CF and other government departments.

This inevitability argument is captured well in the works of retired US Army officers and academics Don Snider and Gayle Watkins. While privatized logistics support has been around the US military and other militaries for some time, the trend towards privatizing training is a recent phenomenon. They argue that in the case of the US military, the ideological drive towards privatization, the post-Cold War downsizing, and concurrent increase in operations carried out by the US, has led policy makers to increasingly turn to private contractors to carry out their foreign military training programs.<sup>30</sup> Along with this move towards privatizing foreign military training, initiatives were launched to transfer education and training of recruit and enlisted forces to private, non-military entities. The US Army justified this move into the traditional field of training by arguing that in the midst of downsizing, core capabilities (i.e., combat) would be protected by hiring out training.<sup>31</sup>

This downsizing and ideological bent has also led the US to contract out what would be considered core combat functions to MPFs. Iraq has seen an increase in the use of MPFs in support of the US military, and indeed other US government departmental missions in Iraq. Private military firms have moved from logistics support, to training support, to a small number of firms that have provided armed personnel that operate with troops on the battlefield.<sup>32</sup> In his book *A Bloody Business*, retired Green Beret Gerald Schumacher describes two types of security contractors operating in Iraq: those contracted by the US State Department and those providing security for other coalition operations. The State Department contractors are highly regulated and all MPFs operated under the authority of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), ostensibly the US Military, at least until the handover of sovereignty to the Iraqi government. As David Isenberg points out in his report on PMCs in Iraq, while the Iraqi government is now de jure in charge since the end of the CPA, its sovereignty is largely in name only.<sup>33</sup> While MPFs as stated only make up a small number of the overall contractors being employed in theatre, they are heavily armed and have been involved in combat.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the US has seen an evolution in contractor support, moving from MSFs to the provision of training both foreign and domestic forces in areas considered “core capabilities” by MCFs. The final step has seen the employment of MPFs in Iraq, often armed, sometimes involved in the ultimate core capability—combat.

## **Canadian Contractor Augmentation Program**

The Canadian military's experience has been similar, if somewhat more cautious in its embrace of contractor support, to its allies. Similar to the US, the UK, Australia and some European Union nations, the first military function to move significantly into the realm of contractor support was logistics. While the CF has used MSFs in the past, such as the Contractor Support Program, which ran from 2000 to 2003, a good example of contractor support in use today is the Canadian Forces Contractor Augmentation Program (CANCAP), which came into existence in December 2002.<sup>35</sup> Along with the downsizing of the CF in the post-Cold War 1990s there was a commensurate increase in the rates of deployment of CF members abroad. These two factors combined to put a severe strain on a number of military logistics occupations, which put at risk the ability of the CF to sustain the high operational tempo they were operating under. CANCAP was initiated to provide “a pre-facilitated theatre support contract with a prime contractor for mature, low-risk theatres where military expertise is not strictly required.”<sup>36</sup> The objectives of CANCAP are as follows:

- ◆ To provide the CF with additional operational flexibility through enhanced support capability.

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- ◆ To free up military personnel for employment where their military skills are most needed.
  - ◆ To help preserve support to war fighting skills in CF support services.<sup>37</sup>

A partnering of firms SNC Lavalin and PAE won the initial contract and supported the CF in Bosnia as part of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) and the deployment of the CF into Kabul, Afghanistan during OPERATION ATHENA. The shift of the CF to Kandahar in 2005 saw the contingent relying on in-place US contracted support because of the security situation. This has changed with the US drawdown in Kandahar, and CANCAP has been employed to support the CF again, although the security situation could hardly be described as a low-risk theatre.

A recent CF Chief of Review Services evaluation of CANCAP concluded that the program was viable in a low-risk environment, but its use in high-risk environments warranted measures to ensure the CF mission is not jeopardized.<sup>38</sup> While the report is generally positive in that CANCAP is normally working in accordance with experiences of other western militaries, some areas of weakness included a lack of DND/CF policy and doctrine governing the employment of contractors, the inability to define the status of contractors as non-combatants under international law, and describing their status as inherently uncertain.<sup>39</sup> The report indicates that while CANCAP has successfully reduced the number of military personnel deployed to both SFOR and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), it has not been a one-for-one replacement. A minimum military requirement has been identified to, among other things, support out-of-camp operations, provide camp security, and protect CANCAP employees.<sup>40</sup> In the US context, these latter two tasks have to some degree been handed over to contractors in places like Iraq, where contractors provide security inside the Green Zone or provide protection for contractor supply convoys on the battlefield.

What is clear, however, is that under current circumstances, the CF is no longer in a position to deploy on expeditionary operations for an extended period of time without the contracted assistance of MSFs. The crunch created by both downsizing and high operational tempo in the 1990s has made contracted logistics support all but a certainty. This pressure on the CF would see the drive to leverage private industry expand beyond the MSFs and move into the realm of training. Two recent examples indicate the extent to which this has been implemented in the CF.

## **Support to Army Training**

The use of MCFs to provide basic occupation training has now extended to the Land Force as well. The Chief of the Land Staff (CLS) indicated that the high operational tempo associated with deployments to Afghanistan has made it difficult to supply junior officers and senior non-commissioned members to Army training establishments. This means that the Army will rely increasingly on civilian contractors and reservists to train new recruits.<sup>41</sup> Under the program, Calian industries was contracted to provide basic driver training on wheeled support vehicles such as light utility vehicles, and five and ten ton vehicles. This moved into a new phase in 2007 with contractors delivering portions of 25 mm gunnery training to military students. Contractors are responsible for classroom instruction and the technical components of the training. The military still delivers the training that involves field and tactical training. These initial steps in the Canadian Army mirrors, to a lesser degree, the US Army experience. Certainly for the Army, this relatively new experience will raise some hard questions over how much training can be delivered by MCFs, and how much must be delivered by the Army to ensure control over the military profession. However, MCFs seem capable and willing to address the needs of the Army in the short term and likely into the future.

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What has been demonstrated in this section is that the use of the private military industry by the CF has been down a path traveled primarily by the US, but also by other western nations, such as the UK and Australia, which have had similar experiences. It first began with contracted logistics support and has moved into training of recruits and basic occupation training, long considered “core” areas by militaries. What remains to be seen is whether this will be a solution to a problem that is viewed by the Army leadership as temporary, or whether this becomes a permanent and expanding feature in the CF training system. The CF challenge in dealing with the dual issues of operational tempo and a simultaneous attempt to expand means that this pressure will not let up for the foreseeable future, and that the next logical path to move along would be the use of MPFs to provide armed services to the CF on the battlefield.

## **The Move to Military Provider Firms**

The previous section demonstrated that western armies in the post-Cold War era have all followed a similar pattern with regard to the increasing privatization of functions once considered the sole purview of the military. The next step was the employment of MPFs to support military and government goals. This has always been the smallest and most controversial areas of operations for private military companies, but saw an explosion of these services during the second Iraq war and in Afghanistan.

David Isenberg points out that MPFs operating in Iraq provide three types of services: close protection for senior civilian officials, non-military site security (buildings and infrastructure), and non-military convoy security. Isenberg argues that most of these MPFs work for organizations other than the US government or the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).<sup>42</sup> This may be slightly deceptive as all private military contractors who work in Iraq must register with and come under the authority of the CPA. This means, in effect, that they are under the de facto authority of the US Military.<sup>43</sup> While previously mentioned that the CPA has ceased to exist with the return of power to an Iraqi government, there is little control exerted by Iraqis over MPFs working inside the country. In general, the private military companies are contracted by the US State Department and others providing security for a myriad of other coalition operations. US State Department rules are strict with regard to hired companies being American and that the personnel employed by these firms are American citizens. Those firms employed by other US government agencies and other private interests can be any combination of personnel from most any country.<sup>44</sup> CPA rules limit the weapons these MPFs may use to small arms with ammunition as large as 7.62 mm. Also, US Army regulations allow MSFs to be armed when required by their combatant commander.<sup>45</sup>

The scope of operations that MPFs were undertaking in Iraq and the reliance the Pentagon had on these firms was large. MPFs were being used to guard reconstruction projects and protect the Chief of the CPA. They were also hired to defend 15 regional authority headquarters and were entrusted with security in the Green Zone of Baghdad.<sup>46</sup> While these tasks were primarily defensive in nature (i.e., protecting people and things), MPFs have been involved in combat. Contractors with the security firm Blackwater engaged in a firefight in Najaf, Iraq, fighting to save the UN administrators at the headquarters. Blackwater resupplied their own personnel during the firefight through their private helicopters. A British firm, Hart Security, also found itself engaged in a firefight to protect a local construction project.<sup>47</sup> There are other examples, but these two specific ones indicate that MPFs, within the US context in contemporary Iraq, have now been employed by the US Government to carry out tasks for which there are too few troops to do. This may be a trend that Canada cannot remain immune. Canada has accepted a prominent role in the counter-insurgency fight and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, which will put a tremendous strain on the CF, particularly the Army. This



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type of deployment is likely the shape of things to come for future CF endeavours as stresses on manpower will be the norm.

This section has examined the path of privatization within western militaries since the Cold War. The first was the provision of logistics services and the engagement of MSFs. An examination of CANCAP shows that this contracting arrangement is likely permanent and that the CF could not likely support extended deployments abroad without contracted logistics support, despite the fact that conditions in current theatres like Afghanistan are not like those for which the programme was originally intended. Next, the move of MCFs into an area that western militaries once considered a "core" function was detailed, along with current Canadian examples of the NFTC program and the recent contracting of some basic occupation training within the Canadian Land Force. It is clear from this that Canada has mirrored the experiences of the other western nations up to the point of employing MPFs in support of CF operations. The experience of the US in Iraq and the experience of these companies indicate that they are primarily employed in defensive tasks, filling the void caused by a lack of soldiers. The CF must be prepared to examine its options with regard to the use of MPFs. Canada and its military leaders should see the employment of MPFs as the next logical step in the privatization of military force, and be prepared to use these firms to assist the CF accomplish its missions and to ameliorate the stresses on the military.

## **The Current Legal Climate**

The legal status of military contractors on the battlefield has become increasingly complicated. Sarah Percy in her Adelphi paper has stated that "if there is a regulatory vacuum regarding PSCs, it exists under current international law."<sup>48</sup> Other commentators, such as Caroline Holmqvist of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute echo this view on the international state of law and regulation, but hold out little hope for any action in the short term that would clarify the situation. She points out that the two most cited pieces of international legal documentation are not applicable or do not address the contemporary private military company. These legal documents are Article 47 of the *Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions* and the *African Union Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism*. Holmqvist, among others, points out that private military industries are ultimately not subject to these protocols as they do not meet the six conditions for being classified as mercenaries.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, these protocols have made it easy for mercenaries, and not just private military companies, to avoid meeting the criteria of the definitions and prosecution.<sup>50</sup> Neither Percy nor Holmqvist hold out hope for any significant change in this legal vacuum in the near future. It is pointed out that it took almost 12 years to get the UN document ratified by the minimum 22 nations and that none of the major western countries are signatories.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, the inability of the international community to establish the legal status of private military companies has led some commentators to believe that only national level legislation or regulation will be effective, especially since national legislation does not require international negotiation, or the requirement to accept the lowest common denominator in order to reach agreement.<sup>52</sup>

Caroline Holmqvist sees two reasons for addressing the regulation of MPFs through national legislation. The first is that regulation by the state affirms their place in the venue of international security relations. The second reason is that she believes that it is at the national level that regulation stands the best chance of success.<sup>53</sup> Amongst the western nations, the US and the United Kingdom (UK) provide two good examples of the state of domestic regulation of the industry, particularly since many of the major PMCs are headquartered in these two countries.

Domestic regulation in the US has two components. There is a licensing system through which potential PMC contracts get reviewed. This licensing system only applies to those American firms doing business with the US Government. There is also legislation that deals with the prosecution of contractors for crimes committed while serving abroad. Interestingly, the US uses the same legislation that governs the sale of military arms and services in terms of third parties abroad to regulate MPFs. This legislation is entitled the *International Traffic in Arms Regulations* (ITAR), which is a subset of the *Arms Export Control Act* (AECA). The ITAR was modified to deal with MPFs, specifically “the sale of ‘defence services’ or the sale of assistance, technical data or training related to military units.”<sup>54</sup> This legislation is administered through the Department of State. The legislation is the *Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act* (MEJA), established in 2000. The act was not created to deal specifically with contractors, but with all civilians working with or for the US military in situations where the host nation was unable or unwilling to prosecute these people for crimes. However, the legislation was applied to contractors as the US generally negotiated immunity to local prosecution on behalf of Department of Defense for civilians in *Status of Forces Agreements* (SOFA) with host nations.



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There are several problems associated with this legislation. The first is that it originally only applied to contractors employed or working for the Department of Defense. This was later modified but some important US federal organizations are still excluded. It also took several years after the introduction of the legislation to establish implementing rules which would provide uniform guidance across all the US armed services as to who could arrest and detain civilian contractors. Next, the MEJA only applied to crimes that would garner one or more years of imprisonment, potentially resulting in contractors being excluded from discipline for misdemeanours, leading to the situation where military personnel are held accountable for misdemeanour offences, but not their civilian counterparts. Finally, prosecutors find that bringing extraterritorial cases to court is complex and expensive, which had lead to a dearth of such cases actually being pursued.<sup>55</sup> In summary, the US has some advanced domestic legislation related to the control of contractors on operations. It has leveraged and adapted existing

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legislation by way of the ITAR and broadened the interpretation of the MEJA to include contractors. The US, however, is not the only nation with such domestic regulations.

In many respects the UK has been the birthplace of the modern private military company. However, the state of domestic regulation of the industry is somewhat less advanced than in the US. The UK does not have legislation that currently covers the private military industry. As a result of the 1998 Legg report, which analyzed the Sandline International "arms to Africa" (Sierra Leone) scandal, recommendations were made for the British government to commission a Green Paper into the options for the regulation of the private military industry.<sup>56</sup>

This Green Paper produced a series of six options for the regulation of the industry: banning military activity abroad; a ban on recruitment for military activity abroad; a licensing scheme for military services; a system of regulation and notification; a general license for companies; and industry self-regulation.<sup>57</sup> Although the Green Paper was published in 2002, the UK has not implemented any of the recommendations.

Development of the private military industry has surpassed the ability of international mechanisms to control this sector. The ability to regulate the industry has defaulted to national domestic law and regulation, with its own unique set of limitations. The UK example, along with the further advanced US state of regulation, demonstrates the pitfalls that Canada must be conscious of when it contemplates the use of MPFs to support CF operations.

To better understand what the CF must do in the legal sphere to employ MPFs in support of operations, it will be useful to understand the current status of civilians under current international law. The first is the status of civilians in relation to the *Laws of Armed Conflict* (LOAC). The *Geneva Conventions* and *Protocols* provide for the protection of civilians on the battlefield. Unarmed civilians not participating in combat are to be considered non-combatants. This is a fairly straightforward and understood principle. The second issue is the status of civilians in the employ of armed forces. An Australian study on the status of civilians in armed conflicts points out that *Geneva Convention III* confers prisoner of war status upon:

Persons who accompany the armed forces without actually being members thereof, such as civilian members of military aircraft crews, war correspondents, supply contractors, members of labour units or of services responsible for the welfare of armed forces...<sup>58</sup>

This definition adequately covers those civilians working for armed forces who are providing unarmed support such as logistics support or the maintenance of complex weapons systems. The third issue is the status of armed contractors under the LOAC. The dilemma that MPFs have created in the legal domain is described by one author, who states that these civilians are no longer just accompanying the force, but are carrying weapons, fixing critical weapons systems, and carrying out other critical functions. This has created a categorization problem where, "Legally speaking, they [military contractors] fall into the same grey area as the unlawful combatants detained at Guantanamo Bay."<sup>59</sup>

This question of whether PMCs constitute lawful combatants is one of the key questions under review by international humanitarian law (IHL). If MPFs are lawful combatants, then they are entitled to some form of prisoner of war (POW) status and can be legally targeted. If they are unlawful combatants, then they have no rights under IHL.

The *Geneva Conventions* are specific in that civilians participating directly in hostilities are considered unlawful combatants or unprivileged belligerents. The key issues then are whether private military firms are, or are not, lawful combatants and what constitutes participating in direct hostilities.<sup>60</sup>

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## Concluding Remarks

This article has briefly analyzed the requirement for the CF to consider the employment of military provider firms (MPFs) as a potential solution to sustaining operations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The CF has reached a point in its operations where the subject can no longer be avoided. Indeed, it may be the next, if not inevitable, then inexorable move in the privatization of war.

Defining what a private military company is and does is a near impossible task given the myriad views on the industry. Several broad categories of services have emerged, ranging from pure support services such as logistics provided by military support firms (MSFs), through training and strategic planning services provided by military consulting firms (MCFs), to security services up to and including armed combat, the latter described as MPFs. These companies range from small, virtual entities to branches or wholly owned subsidiaries of much larger transnational corporations. Where there appears to be a relative agreement among commentators is the reasons for the spectacular rise of the industry post-Cold War. The decline in superpower interest to act in various parts of the world, and the loss of state monopoly on the use and means of violence are key factors. Also, the rise of a market oriented global economy and a conservative ideology have led to the axiom that private industry can do things far more efficiently and effectively than what the government or the public trust can do, in what is often considered the last bastion of state control—the conduct of conflict.

Given the long historical tradition of employment of mercenary forces and private militaries by western actors, the CF has a number of pressing reasons to contemplate the use of MPFs to support operations. To begin with, the CF is merely mirroring a trend being followed by other western military services. The largest area that has impacted western militaries is the employment of MSFs. This development has emerged in other countries, primarily the US, but also the UK and Australia. The CF Contractor Augmentation Program (CANCAP) is the Canadian military's expression of this, and is being used in relatively high risk theatres such as Afghanistan. Indeed, the CF has reached the point (much like other western militaries) that extended expeditionary operations could not likely be carried out without contracted support.

Next, private military industry has moved into the realm of providing services in an area that western militaries have often considered a "core" function, that of training recruits and soldiers conducting basic occupation training. This has led to the partnership with MCFs in the delivery of basic occupation training in such initiatives as the NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program and some aspects of basic Army training. This also reflects the experience of Canada's allies, particularly the US military, which also moved into the realm of contracting out what used to be considered "core" training functions under the purview of the uniformed services.

In keeping with our allies it would appear that the next logical step for Canada is the employment of MPFs in support of military operations. The US experience in this sphere is definitive. Iraq has demonstrated that the US government, particularly the State Department and the Pentagon, have turned to MPFs to fill the gap caused by a shortage of US military forces on the ground to conduct a myriad of personal protection, infrastructure security and convoy escort tasks. These MPFs have been involved in bloody and deadly combat. The CF is no different than its allies and will not be immune to personnel shortages, and to carry out all the tasks assigned to a CF commander in theatre, the CF may need to resort to MPFs to successfully accomplish missions.

In terms of recruiting and retention, there is little to indicate that the CF will be able to generate the number of forces necessary to meet the demands of the post-Cold War environment. An examination of Canadian society as a whole indicates a number of

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disturbing trends for the CF. The Canadian population is growing largely through immigration, and these immigrants are increasingly coming from what would be considered non-traditional areas of the world where organizations such as the military and the police are not held in high regard, and thus they have little interest in serving in the CF. Also, Canada's aging population means the available pool of recruits will continue to shrink for the foreseeable future. Through the 1960s to the 1980s, Canada has a documented history of neglect of its Armed Forces in peacetime, especially amongst youth, who are the target recruiting audience.

Canada has also undergone a social revolution in the last decade, eschewing the traditional Canadian characteristics of respect for and deference of authority. This has led to a number of cultural tribes within Canada. Further study of those societal subgroups indicates that relatively few demonstrate interest in the CF as a career. More troubling, many of those who demonstrate an interest in the CF have personality characteristics that may be undesirable in the current operating environment. Therefore, the prospects of the CF ever having the human resource pool necessary to meet all the demands placed on it by government is very unlikely, and alternative solutions may have to be found if Canada wishes to remain a player on the international stage.

All is not lost, however. The legal analysis indicates that there are ways that the CF could legally engage MPFs in support of its missions and Government of Canada objectives. The first is that the CF could meet international legal tests of responsibility and authority by ensuring MPFs under their employ fall within the chain of command, changing the current customer-contractor paradigm. Additionally, the status of civilians employed by MPFs under international humanitarian law (IHL) and the law of armed conflict (LOAC) could be solidified by following a proposed UK solution of enrolling hired MPF personnel into the Reserves. Finally, the CF would restrict the employment of MPFs to those tasks that are more defensively oriented in nature, leaving active offensive operations to service personnel. While the difference between offensive and defensive may be difficult to describe in some circumstances, from a legal perspective, limiting MPF employment to those defensively oriented tasks will protect both the contractor and the state should future legal issues arise. These initiatives would put the CF on a much firmer legal footing when employing MPFs (along with other types of private military industry).

Legal analysis demonstrates the CF needs to establish doctrine with regard to the employment of not just MPFs, but MSFs and MCFs as well. Employment of these firms is currently done on a case-by-case contractual basis, and thus, there is no common understanding within the CF. Even if the CF decided for various reasons not to employ MPFs in support of operations, it must have doctrine to deal with these firms as they will be employed on the battlefield in an increasingly complex multinational and joint environment. It is not a stretch to imagine situations in the future where CF elements may have to rely on the services provided by an MPF contracted by another country or even another agency of the Canadian government, or come to the assistance of these MPFs who are employed by others. Therefore, doctrine is a pressing requirement.

Second, further research needs to be carried out on the exact legal mechanisms that would be required to confidently employ MPFs within the CF context. This paper has highlighted some general concepts that could be implemented to ensure the employment of MPFs is done in the most legal fashion possible, but whether this occurs within the framework of amendments to the *National Defence Act* or some other form of government legislation or device needs to be further explored.

Third, mechanisms now exist within the CF to conduct some operational research relating to the employment of MPFs on the battlefield. This could be achieved through



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the engagement of the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre in Wainwright, Alberta. This facility is used as final training venue for high readiness Land Force units and employs a real time, free play enemy along with actors simulating other government agencies and civilians on the battlefield. As a minimum, MPFs should be modeled and represented on the battlefield for the training purposes of the unit preparing to deploy. More specifically, an MPF could be contracted to provide those defensive tasks described earlier within an exercise scenario to examine the concept and determine what the advantages, disadvantages and limitations would be for the CF in a situation where lives would not be on the line. Also, whether the employment of MPFs can be rationalized to provide a whole of government approach for their use, rather than the fractured approach that occurs in the US between the State Department and the Pentagon, would be useful to examine.

Finally, this paper did not delve into the moral or ethical implications surrounding the employment of MPFs. It will be left to others to argue the merits or demerits of their use by states and other organizations. However, further research into these moral and ethical implications would be useful in analyzing the question in all of its facets, including the impact on the military as a profession. How does this contracting of force affect the status of the military as a profession and the soldier/officer as a professional? Also, where would the employment of MPFs fit within the context of Canadian society and what would Canadians accept in the delivery of defence of their nation? Answers to these questions would shed some light on where the issue goes in the future, potentially leading to some sort of industry regulation in Canada.

In the final analysis, however, it is clear that the CF can no longer ignore the employment of MPFs on the battlefield. They are now part of the increasingly complex contemporary operating environment, along with non-governmental organizations, non-state actors, insurgents, transnational corporations, and finally, traditional state military organizations. The CF will need to learn how to work with them, beside them or even employ them. The analysis in this paper has demonstrated that they are a "tool in the toolbox" that can be used as a potential solution to the chronic problems facing the Canadian military. Unlike the quote from the Chief of the Land Staff at the start of this examination, the CF will not, for the foreseeable future, be in a position to reject out of hand this potential solution.

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## About the Author ...

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# WITH BLINDERS ON: THE BLACK WATCH AND THE BATTLE FOR SPYCKER, SEPTEMBER 12-14 1944

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Mr. David R. O'Keefe



Major Alan Carmichael

The first two weeks of September 1944 was a fortnight to remember for the 22-year-old Lt. Joe Nixon and the men of the Black Watch. Following the collapse of the German Army in Normandy, the Black Watch and their fellow units in 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division engaged in the “swarming tour” following on the heels of retreating German armies along the channel coast of France. With optimism that this was indeed the “final hundred days” of the Second Great War of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Allied high command faced a conundrum regarding the strategic direction of the war in Europe. Realizing that the capture of deepwater ports was essential to maintaining their drive on Germany, Allied high command sought alternatives to capturing them in costly and laborious head-on assaults. The shortcut it seemed was Field Marshal Montgomery’s Operation Market-Garden that promised to “bounce” the Rhine and seize a bridgehead leading into the Ruhr industrial area of Germany—the result of which would bring the Third Reich to its knees. For an Allied high command struggling with flagging reinforcements, growing war weariness, and a Presidential election year, Market-Garden seemed to be the perfect elixir. With all eyes focussed on the prize at Arnhem, the Canadian sweep up the channel coast became second effort—at least as far as manpower, materiel, and press coverage were concerned. With First Canadian Army tasked to capture the port cities of Le Havre, Dieppe, Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk, the Black Watch portion of the liberation campaign commenced with the return to Dieppe just days after the second anniversary of the deadly raid in August 1942.

For Joe Nixon, Dieppe marked an auspicious introduction to life with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. Amid roaring crowds, bouquets of flowers and free-flowing Calvados, the Black Watch mingled with the “black mass of humanity” near the spot where men from C Company and the mortar platoon suffered so cruelly on that fateful August day.<sup>1</sup> Forty-eight hours later, Nixon took part in an emotionally charged parade through the city streets, but this diversion was short-lived; upon the last note of “Hielan’ Laddie,” the Black Watch moved out again.<sup>2</sup> With 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Division driving on Boulogne and Calais, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division pushing



Major Alan Carmichael

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into Belgium, General Charles Foulkes' 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division headed for Dunkirk. Due to the diversion of supplies and reinforcements for Market-Garden, Canadian units found themselves stretched to the limit, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Division could not tackle the 20,000 strong Dunkirk garrison alone. Suffering from acute shortages of artillery ammunition and petrol, Foulkes ordered a *cordon sanitaire* be established around the port tasking his battalions to "contain" and "patrol" the perimeter.<sup>3</sup> With Dunkirk last on the list for liberation, "plenty of containing" was on tap and the prospect of sitting and watching the Germans did not appeal to some who "were beginning to get restless."<sup>4</sup> For the Black Watch, the seemingly mundane role in this process commenced with the occupation of the tiny hamlet of Grande Mille Brugge on the Colme canal.

"Why this place rates the title 'GRANDE' Mille Brugge is hard to imagine" the wry witted Black Watch war diarist noted on September 9<sup>th</sup>, "as it is nothing more...than a row of small houses on either side of the canal."<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the terrain surrounding the hamlet was anything but inviting. With the dykes running along the canal blown in numerous areas by retreating Germans, it was fortunate that the Black Watch did not have to dig in "on the fly" as the majority of the adjacent fields were under water; leaving only a brick works and a few fieldstone buildings strung along the canal for cover.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after establishing Battalion headquarters in the ovens of the local brick works on the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>, German shells began to land.<sup>7</sup> Consisting at first of the traditional sprinkling of mortar and 88 mm fire the cover afforded by the structures along the canal kept casualties "amazingly low."<sup>8</sup> This changed over the next few days when 105 and 150 mm guns joined the fray taking a heavy toll on battalion transport.<sup>9</sup> The situation moved from bad to worse when the defenders of Dunkirk turned their giant coastal rail guns landward onto Black Watch positions. "The shells sounded like freight trains as they descended" recalled Nixon; and life in Grand Mille Brugge became less than comfortable as casualties mounted.<sup>10</sup> The proportion of casualties to the amount of shelling was still "unduly low," but as the war diarist from the 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance recorded, the "luckless individuals who got in the way of fragments from these shells were either killed or suffered particularly severe wounds with a very poor prognosis." In a period of two days, over 50 men were lost—including Nixon's veteran scout platoon sergeant Barney Benson who survived the massacre at Verrieres Ridge six weeks earlier. Benson, who had shown the young platoon commander the ropes, broke from cover to respond to the cries of a wounded comrade, and was nearly cut in half by the splinters of a coastal gun shell.<sup>11</sup> Although loaded on an ambulance Jeep and rushed to the Regimental Aid Post, the "completely fearless" and inspirational scout bled out en route leaving a lasting void within the battalion.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the shelling, intense patrol activity and sniping characterized the five-day stay at Grande Mille Brugge with fatigue taking its toll on morale as men remained on alert for German probes that failed to materialize. Unlike other garrisons encountered, such as that at Copenaxfort where 250 Germans surrendered after a brief fight to Major E. Pinkham's C Company on the 9<sup>th</sup>, the mixed bag of Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe, Kriegsmarine, and SS troops in Dunkirk proved more aggressive than previously encountered.<sup>13</sup> As a result, continual "punching and jabbing" in the towns around Grande Mille Brugge began with German patrols infiltrating by night to lay minefields that severed communications between battalion and brigade headquarters.<sup>14</sup> In addition, they jammed radio communications, cut or booby trapped phone lines, and ambushed repair parties. For the most part, however, morale in the Black Watch was beginning to waiver as the men became increasingly "fed up of the monotony" and the "somewhat depressing business."<sup>15</sup>

Inundations of the fields surrounding Dunkirk restricted movement to roads and raised areas, and limited the options for an approaching army. As such, the Germans adopted a policy of holding towns and villages outside of the coastal fortress to slow and



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dissipate the strength of an advancing enemy force. Unlike other channel ports the Canadians experienced, the commander of the Dunkirk Garrison (General Von Kluge) promoted an aggressive defence and demonstrated an eager willingness to fight to the last.<sup>16</sup> Despite the fact that he allowed French civilians to flee the quarantined city, Canadian intelligence revealed a strengthening of the outposts—including the village of Spycker used by the Germans as a base to bring fire down on the Grande Mille Brugge area.<sup>17</sup> In response, Foulkes ordered 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade to clear these outposts and the Black Watch were instructed to capture Spycker as part of an operation known as “Blinder.”<sup>18</sup>

The last time the medieval village of Spycker experienced fighting was during the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 when it served as an outpost for French forces defending to the last. During that time the village witnessed bitter fighting and the barbarism of war; including the execution of French soldiers at the hands of the Nazis and the destruction and deprivation of the long occupation. Four years later, the tables were turned and the Germans utilized the village as a base for forward observation of the road leading from Grande Mille Brugge to Bourgbourville and a hub for fighting patrols.<sup>19</sup> Surrounding the town, a series of small farms buildings provided the Germans with bases for sniping or re-infiltration, and reports from company-sized patrols on consecutive nights indicated heavier German forces in Spycker than previously thought.<sup>20</sup> As it was clear that the German defenders were reorganizing a “fairly strong force” in the vicinity, the attack was laid on for last light of September 12<sup>th</sup>. Due to other commitments along the canal, the Black Watch commanding officer (CO), Lt. Col. Frank Mitchell, could not commit all four rifle companies to the attack; instead, B and C companies, under the command of Majors Alan Carmichael and Ed Pinkham respectively, drew the short straws.

Widely considered the best company commander the Black Watch had to offer, Carmichael “had a very good approach at O groups—very simple, not complicated ...he was able to pick the right officers for the job...he had his intelligence, then he transmitted that intelligence to us.”<sup>21</sup> Pinkham on other hand did not command the same respect as his counterpart as one fellow company commander recalled: “he was not the best officer but everyone wanted to be in his company.”<sup>22</sup> Known for his great fortune rather than his talent, his acerbic wit and self-aggrandising style did not sit well with some, but none could deny that what he lacked in tactical skill he more than made up for in luck—and after the experiences of the previous summer, some believed that the latter formed the crucial element in battle.<sup>23</sup>

Carmichael’s company had a taste of Spycker during the night of the 11<sup>th</sup> when they pushed into the town only to be forced to back by a heavy German counter-attack.<sup>24</sup> Although casualties in B Company were negligible, heavy losses sustained over the previous weeks, coupled with little rest and reorganization and inexperienced reinforcements, meant both companies would go into battle under strength with sections numbering 4 or 5 instead of the prescribed 8-10.<sup>25</sup>

The battle for Spycker marked the beginning of a dark chapter for the Canadian Army as it pertained to reinforcements. As the Black Watch suffered 97% casualties in their July 25<sup>th</sup> attack on Verrieres Ridge, and a further 40% ten days later in a prelude to Operation Totalize, they found themselves at the sharp end of an unprepossessing problem that plagued the Canadian effort in North West Europe during the fall of 1944.<sup>26</sup>

The first sign that reinforcements were inadequately trained came on the heels of the Verrieres debacle when an exasperated Frank Mitchell wrote: “Typical story is the lad who saw the invasion pictures of D-Day...thought the time had come to join up and was killed at May-sur-Orne on 5 August—we got them with 6 to 8 weeks total service. We had an accident last week; man changing a Bren gun did not know you could take the magazine off. Do you wonder that we become balder and greyer...”<sup>27</sup> According to Carmichael, who taught tactics for eight months at No 4 CTS, the reinforcements in the



Combat Camera at 131233

The Black Watch marching through a liberated Dieppe 1944

ranks (mostly from the artillery), “were willing—even determined—but were NOT up to infantry standards.”<sup>28</sup> In particular, he pointed out their unfamiliarity with the PIAT, the Bren, and in many cases grenades which they seemed afraid to handle.” It was clear to the company commander that “unnecessary casualties were caused by their unfamiliarity with infantry weapons.”<sup>29</sup> In addition, their physical strength and stamina was of concern as most were not in shape for the arduous life of an infantryman, and Carmichael noted that “we nearly liquidated the lot by marching them 60 or 70 miles.”<sup>30</sup> When it came to officer reinforcements, Carmichael considered them “adequate” but

some were unable to grasp brief orders necessitated by field conditions. According to Carmichael, the acute problem within the rifle companies lay in “an almost desperate want” of NCOs.<sup>31</sup> “Much good material was available” but time to train them during the gruelling pursuit of the German army was lacking, and as a result, a desperate gap in leadership appeared at the same moment as the Black Watch embarked on Operation Blinder.<sup>32</sup>

To augment the depleted ranks, and limit the effect of the collective inexperience of the reinforcements, Mitchell added a sprinkling of new arrivals within the companies in an effort to indoctrinate them to battlefield conditions. For extra support, leadership—and to gain further experience himself—Lt. Joe Nixon joined Carmichael’s B Company for the battle.<sup>33</sup>

The plan for the Black Watch portion of “Blinder” seemed simple enough: following a 15-minute assault barrage, B Company, under Carmichael, would advance on foot on the right flank along the road leading North West into Spycker where they would consolidate at the village church; C Company, under Pinkham, would move on the left flank along the Colme Canal to the main crossroads west of the church. With the use of troop carrying vehicles restricted by petrol shortages and treacherous roads whose soft shoulders offered little mercy for heavy machines, the advance would be made by foot over soggy terrain. To cover the attack, a barrage by 5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment would precede the attack, while 4.2-inch mortars were available on “on-call” for defensive fire tasks.<sup>34</sup> Again, ammunition shortages limited the duration of the both, and economy of effort was the watchword for the day when it came to the fire plan.<sup>35</sup> With H-Hour set for 18:00, the first boot crossed the start line at 18:05 and the battle for Spycker was on.

According to Pinkham, the artillery barrage in front of C Company “worked perfectly” and was “completely successful,” but as the companies advanced, it was clear that some of the recently arrived reinforcements were “jumpy” and command and control proved difficult in the fading light.<sup>36</sup> C Company made good time and arrived on its objective with little trouble. The only hitch came when the platoon on the right flank advanced too far from one farm building to another and occupied an untenable position 400 yards from the crossroads. Realizing his error, the platoon commander tried to extricate his men

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from the positions, but was lost along with several of his men in the attempt. As a result, the company occupied the crossroads and the buildings on the south side, three or four houses short of the church.<sup>37</sup>

The approach of Carmichael's B Company into Spycker was a more laborious task than originally anticipated. Footing along the route proved treacherous and many of the men ended up waist-deep in the quagmire between the two towns. About halfway in their approach to the church, a few bursts of machinegun fire forced the company to go to ground in the wet ground. Pinned in the flat fields, with little cover, soggy shell holes came in handy. Realizing that his company was in danger of bogging down, Carmichael ordered the 2-inch mortars to lob shells towards the machine gun positions while the others made a break for cover in Spycker.<sup>38</sup> After a brief interlude, B Company arrived in Spycker against little opposition and Mitchell was able to report to Brigade that his companies were not only in the town by 18:55, but that clearing operations had begun.<sup>39</sup> "Our attack" recalled Nixon, "was very successful in that we got in there without too much difficulty."<sup>40</sup> However, as per German doctrine, and the experience of the previous night showed, counter-attacks were sure to follow.

About 30 minutes after entering the town, the first in a series of German counter-attacks began. Unfortunately for B Company, they, like the lost platoon of C Company, strayed too far forward of their intended objective near the church and found themselves in untenable positions when the first German counter-attack hit. "It caught some of our troops by surprise...they had us with our heads down" Nixon recalled.<sup>41</sup> Immediately, B Company fell back under heavy German fire with Carmichael wounded in the first exchange. Without his leadership, command and control temporarily wavered, and Nixon, along with Carmichael and 53 others, managed to work their way into the schoolhouse east of the church overlooking the town graveyard. Cut off from Canadian lines, they witnessed one platoon of reinforcements slaughtered by German fire as they tried to retreat in a haphazard fashion through the village streets.<sup>42</sup> What was left of B Company, about a platoon's worth of battle-shaken men, returned to battalion headquarters in the brick ovens in Grande Mille Brugge after a harrowing run through no-man's land.

The counter-attacks did not hit C Company positions directly at first, but a hole on Pinkham's right flank due to B Company's predicament soon became a concern. In this area, a group of 30 Germans appeared from a barn and approached the Canadian positions across an open field. As they wore soft hats instead of helmets, Pinkham's first inclination was to accept their surrender, but as their advance continued with their weapons at the ready, and without white flags, the order was given—and the 30 were cut down to the last. In the ensuing melee, elements of C Company managed to make it into the church, which by 20:00, Pinkham reported was under heavy mortar and shellfire but that everything, for the time being at least, was "OK."<sup>43</sup>

Back at the brick works, Mitchell personally exercised damage control with the remnants of B Company. Sensing their near mutinous mood after their rough ride in Spycker on consecutive nights, Mitchell wisely took the soft approach. Instead of barking out orders to return to their comrades trapped in the town, he commiserated with their plight, let them enjoy a smoke, and calmed them down. Then, in a feat of leadership brilliance, told them that in an hour he would have their stuff ready and as many as wanted to go would go; for those that did not, nothing would be held against them. "If he had threatened, all would have mutinied," said one soldier, "when he put it that way what the hell could you do?"<sup>44</sup> Within the hour, the stragglers from B Company braved German fire yet again to assist Pinkham's right flank, but there was still no news from Carmichael, Nixon and the men in the school.



Shot from vantage point of Nixon in Schoolhouse

By this time, the situation in Spycker was confused and the fighting was sporadic but intense. Each time a shadow or silhouette appeared, rifles fired, Brens chattered, grenades were thrown and men grappled in desperate close combat with little quarter asked, and little given. Just after midnight, the Germans discovered the remnants of B Company in the schoolhouse and as “all hell broke loose.”<sup>45</sup> Inside, the situation looked grim; of the 55 men crowded in the schoolhouse, all but 20 were wounded. The smell of sweat, fear, and burning gun oil set the scene as the Germans periodically stormed the building over the next ten hours. At 04:00, the Germans began a determined house cleaning from the right flank with the officer in charge moving right down the center of the street while small parties searched the empty buildings on each side.<sup>46</sup> In one house, a badly wounded Lt. Warren Trudeau, came face to face with a German dressed in a paratroops smock making his way through a barricaded doorway. Semi-sedated with morphine due to leg and abdomen wounds, without a rifle, Sten, or pistol, Trudeau feared this was “it.”<sup>47</sup> In a last, desperate gesture, he grabbed his flare gun, closed his eyes, and fired; the phosphorous flare hitting the paratrooper square in the chest knocking him backwards out the door and setting his camouflaged smock alight. For the next few minutes, amongst the cacophony of battle noise, nothing was louder than the blood-curdling screams from the German as phosphorus ate through his chest.<sup>48</sup> In the building next door, an unlucky group of reinforcements was captured just yards from the school; but when the clearing party neared Nixon’s position, the young officer took matters into his own hands. Grabbing a box of No. 36 grenades, he raced to the top floor of the schoolhouse and proceeded to lob them out of a shell hole in the roof at rapid intervals. After running down three times to replenish his stock, Nixon’s luck ran out. A white hot flash is all he recalls of the German grenade that went off inside the school sending him hurtling down the staircase and leaving him unconscious for the next few hours. For the time being though, the Germans were held at bay.



While Nixon and the others fought for their lives in the schoolhouse, Mitchell at battalion headquarters tried to establish a clear picture of the situation up ahead. The conflicting nature of the information available convinced him to hold back the 17-pounder anti-tank guns used to consolidate a secured position, fearing their capture or destruction if committed too early. Instead, he ordered Pinkham to reconnoitre gun positions at first light and call in the guns as needed.<sup>49</sup> To alleviate the pressure on his companies, he requested support from tanks or heavy armoured cars at 07:00 explaining to Megill that the situation, although seemingly solid at first, had now deteriorated. Instead of complying immediately with the request, which was indicative of the souring relationship between the Black Watch CO and the Brigade Commander, Megill radioed that "armoured cars were not suitable in daylight and would take too long to get there" and demanded further details before he would accommodate the request.<sup>50</sup> Immediately, Mitchell fired back that "one company was cut off" and that the situation continued to deteriorate.<sup>51</sup> Megill's response was to send a Liaison Officer up to "find out the full story." Exasperated, Mitchell sent one final message a full hour after his first request was made: "Can you send armoured cars even if it does take 2 hours?" Finally, at 08:17, Megill acquiesced, and not only did he order a troop of armoured cars to Spycker, but called in air support on the coastal rail guns in Dunkirk. By 09:26, the armoured support had yet to arrive and Mitchell once again contacted Megill to ask when they could be expected; "as soon as they come" was the only response.

Meanwhile in Spycker, German infiltration increased in both frequency and boldness as the day wore on. In C Company's position, one German non-commissioned officer (NCO) managed to make it within five yards of Pinkham's headquarters before Bren fire brought him down. His demise tipped off the position of four others who remained in slit trenches after daybreak and they paid the ultimate price for their indiscretion. Later, Pinkham noticed a group of 27 Germans retreating northwest through a nearby farm building and turned his snipers loose; within seconds, six lay dead with the rest scattering among the wheat.<sup>52</sup>

The remnants of B Company, which Mitchell "persuaded" to return to Spycker, arrived in one piece during the night and took up positions in the Church—just a stones throw from the school on the other side of the graveyard. By daybreak, the scene inside what was left of the church, reminded one of Dante's *Inferno*. The dead and wounded lay on the pews and in the aisles, while Marcel Paresys (the local Abbott) worked the floor distributing rosaries and administering the Last Rites. The wounded, at least those that could still fire, were propped up against windows with the aid of mattresses. In the corner, a signaller, killed when shrapnel pierced his skull, sat motionless over his radio, headset still in place looking as though he were asleep. Blood, discarded dressing packages and plaster dust lay everywhere; shell casings littered the floor, and the smell of sulphur, urine and cigarette smoke hung thick while one severely wounded man, delirious and fighting shock, cursed for anyone to give him a shot of rum that he could not afford to have.

Finally at 10:00, the first signs of support arrived in the form of a lone 17-pounder which set fire to a barn used as a German base west of the



Abbott Marcel Paresys





Major F.M. Mitchell

town. Following this, the much-celebrated armoured cars arrived but proved completely ineffective, the first succumbed to an enemy rifle grenade, the second bogged in a ditch. Making matters worse, a German patrol heavily mined the road west of Spycker during the night, preventing vehicles from getting forward to evacuate wounded or bring up supplies. The Black Watch assault companies had now gone 24 hours without food and were running out of ammunition, water, and above all, time.

About this time in the schoolhouse, Joe Nixon regained consciousness. Having lay prostrate at the bottom of the stairs for close to five hours, a glassy stare and complete unconsciousness fooled all into thinking he was dead. Upon awakening, Nixon noticed that of the original 55 who made it to the church twelve hours earlier, only 21 remained—18 of these, including Carmichael, wounded. During the night, the level of stress and battle exhaustion rose to a point

where some of the 55 broke and fled. Some chose to flee to Canadian lines, but either fell into German hands in the process or were killed; others, simply “walked in” and gave themselves up to the Germans.<sup>53</sup> With only two able-bodied men left to fight with by 09:00, Nixon gathered all remaining weapons into the middle of classroom and collected bandoliers of ammunition and stray grenades from the wounded. Stens, Bren, Lee-Enfields, the odd pistol, a commando knife, and a PIAT for destroying tanks completed the haul. “We wanted to think there was a lot more of us than just the three,” Nixon recalled years later.<sup>54</sup> To keep the Germans guessing as to the actual numbers in the school, one man fired single bursts from the Bren gun while Nixon and the other unloaded their .303s at rapid intervals into the graveyard. Despite their efforts, the probes grew bolder as the day wore on with German troops slithering around the gravestones to toss grenades through the schoolhouse windows—only to have Nixon and company toss them back in record time.<sup>55</sup> This *Danse Macabre* continued throughout the day to the point where the bolts on their weapons needed to be kicked open in an effort to reload.<sup>56</sup> Late in the afternoon on the 13th, Nixon noticed the Germans gathering behind a neighbouring wall for what appeared to be their fourth and hopefully final assault on the school.<sup>57</sup> Within earshot of the structure one brazen paratrooper shouted in broken English “you c’mon Canadians give up...you don’t have to fight anymore...we’ll look after you...it will be fine.”<sup>58</sup> For Nixon, this was enough to “get (his) dander up” and he took the PIAT, loaded one bomb, popped around the corner of the doorframe, and fired. “It went off with an awful bang about fifteen feet from where I was standing,” he recalled.<sup>59</sup> As Carmichael succinctly put it, the PIAT proved “outstandingly effective.”<sup>60</sup> Quickly, two additional bombs followed and as Nixon related years later, “we never heard another word out of them—that stopped everything.”<sup>61</sup>

Heroism was not restricted to the schoolhouse, however, and while Nixon was settling the issue with the help of the PIAT across a field in an isolated farmhouse, a 28-year-old painter from Montreal was earning the Military Medal for his actions. Private Frederick De Lutis, a sniper attached to Pinkham’s C Company and the notorious “lost platoon,” took charge of the remaining men and organized an all-round defence of the farmhouse a few hundred yards from the town when his platoon commander and NCOs were knocked out of action. At first light, it was discovered that the Germans had infiltrated the area cutting De Lutis and his men from off from Canadian lines. Soon mortar and artillery hit the farmhouse area and the counter-attacks that hit Nixon’s group in the schoolhouse engulfed De Lutis’ position as well. Moving room to room, the Black Watch sniper encouraged men to fight on, accounting for nine of the enemy along the

way with the use of his scoped Lee-Enfield. During the barrage, one of the men went down outside the house and De Lutus broke cover while German shells softened the area up for their attack. Wounded by splinters from a mortar shell, De Lutus showed no signs of letting down and reached the wounded man in good time, dragging him to the relative safety of the farmhouse where he resumed the direction of its defence yet again.<sup>62</sup> Without his courage, leadership, and coolness under fire, the men in the farmhouse would likely have succumbed to the weight of German attacks, and as a result, De Lutus was granted an immediate Military Medal.<sup>63</sup>



Nixon and two local inhabitants of Spycker June 2007

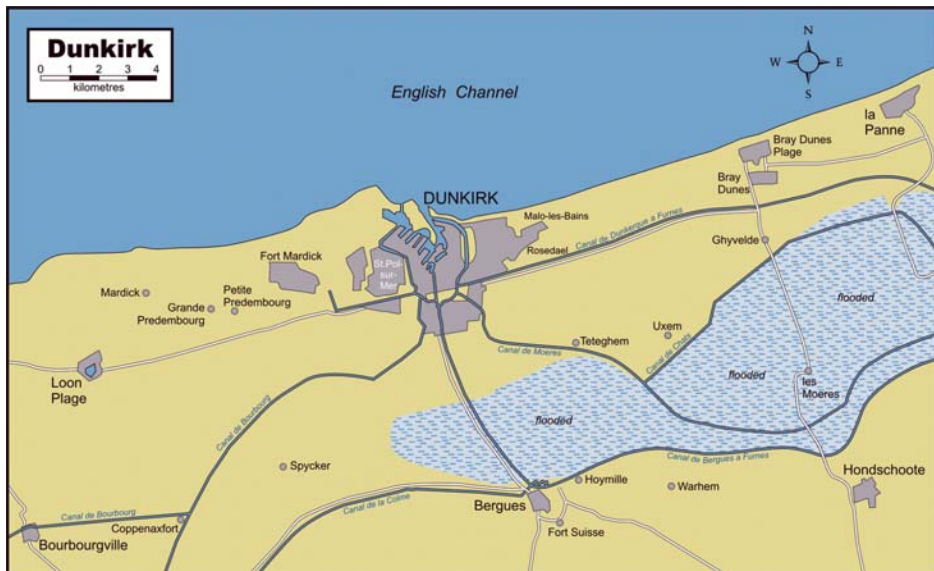
Courtesy of Author

In the town itself, it was dawning on Major Ed Pinkham that his notorious good luck was indeed running out and he informed Mitchell that the Germans occupied barns to the north and the west and could use any empty building surrounding Spycker at will. If, Pinkham argued, reinforcements were made available immediately to occupy these structures this could be prevented, but as current strength was lacking he concluded that his position was untenable.<sup>64</sup> With the flooded conditions only a force of sufficient size could accomplish this objective and

Pinkham wisely concluded that “it was wasteful” at present to engage in a battle of attrition with “little gain on our side.”<sup>65</sup> With the western road still closed, the armoured cars ineffective in the tight streets, and the necessity of maintaining a firm base at Grande Mille Brugge a going concern, Mitchell could not spare his remaining rifle or support companies. Under the circumstances, Mitchell proposed to withdraw from the town and informed Megill, who in turn tasked the Regiment de Maisonneuve to take over the Black Watch positions.<sup>66</sup> Although the pieces were available at Brigade for the evacuation, no plan was in place. As mid-afternoon approached, Mitchell requested ambulance Jeeps be sent up “immediately” but it took time for Brigade to comply; and there is no indication that any were dispatched at this time. Demonstrably annoyed at the lack of immediate action at Brigade headquarters, he signalled forty minutes later that the “situation was not good” and demanded to know “...when can we expect the new plan?”<sup>67</sup> The delay at Brigade stemmed from the fact that both Brigadier Megill and his de facto deputy from the 5<sup>th</sup> Field Regiment, Lt. Col Nighswander, were away from headquarters visiting other battalions taking part in “Blinder” and nobody could make a decision either way in the absence.<sup>68</sup> Brigade attempted to re-assure Mitchell, however, that Megill knew of the problem and that upon his return “shortly,” he would “get (a) plan up as soon as possible.” This news, however, was little comfort for those still trapped in Spycker.<sup>69</sup>

As daylight faded into night, flames from burning structures in and around the town illuminated the landscape, but still there was no plan. Sporadic fighting continued in the town, although it was clear by this time that the Germans were just as exhausted as the Black Watch; a lull in the fighting right across the front held for the most part with the exception of quick retort from automatic weapons or the strafing of Mitchell’s headquarters in the brick plant by Spitfires.<sup>70</sup> Finally, late in the evening, Brigade had its plan worked out and Phase One of the relief of the Black Watch by the Regiment de Maisonneuve commenced at 03:00—33 hours after the initial assault went in.

It took just over five hours to complete the evacuation; men from A Company escorted Jeep ambulances and stretcher-bearers on foot along the same route used by C Company two days earlier. This required stealthy precision to avoid alerting the



Germans as to what was happening. For the most part, everything occurred in silence and Nixon and the B Company casualties escaped the school undetected, leaving behind their equipment, weapons—including the now infamous PIAT. Others, like De Lutis and those that remained in the farmhouse, used the darkness to quietly extricate themselves leaving behind the bodies of their platoon commander and two others that died in the bitter process.<sup>71</sup> With C Company joining in the move, it became clear to the Germans what was occurring and they pressed home an uncoordinated attack on the remaining Black Watch positions. By this time, evacuation of the ambulatory wounded neared completion with only a few rearguards and the severely wounded, like Warren Trudeau. Fully aroused by German and Canadian voices closing on his position, and suffering from nasty wounds through the upper thigh and abdomen, the platoon commander used a combination of fear induced adrenaline and a dose of morphine to launch himself over a high fence—only to come crashing down atop a hapless Canadian stretcher-bearer coming to his rescue.

As Mitchell would later sardonically record, “the area of Grand Mille Brugge (and) Spycker will always recall bitter memories to a lot of us...One could always count on a fair amount of excitement.”<sup>72</sup> Losses for the Black Watch in Operation Blinder numbered nearly 60 in just 36 hours—almost half the force committed. Considered to be “seriously under-strength” as a result of the fighting in Spycker, Brigade withdrew Mitchell’s battalion from the line for a hard-earned three-day period of rest and reorganization. As the Brigade plan called for the Black Watch to turn their positions at Grande Mille Brugge over to the Maisonneuves and march 10 kms to Bourbourgville, the route out of Spycker proved a more arduous journey than originally anticipated. With the roads clogged with men and material and the soft shoulders offering no mercy for heavy vehicles, a limited amount of Jeeps were the only means available for evacuating the wounded. For those lucky enough to lay prostrate atop Jeep ambulances their greatest threat came from rain, wind and cold that produced acute hypothermia in some as they sped to the regimental aid post.<sup>73</sup> With fires still raging in Spycker, A and D companies placed a man every 15 feet along the canal road to act as a guide for the exhausted and bewildered survivors. Amid the rhythmic rumble of Jeeps loaded with wounded, it was clear that not much would console the survivors—but a “good work” from each picket as they passed sure helped.

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## About the Author ...

David R O'Keefe is a Gemini nominated historian with a dozen television documentaries to his credit including *Black Watch: Massacre at Verrieres Ridge*. Research on all aspects of the Black Watch started 15 years ago when O'Keefe was an officer in the Regiment and an undergraduate in history at McGill and Concordia Universities. After leaving the Army to continue his academic career, O'Keefe was brought on board as the signals intelligence specialist by the Directorate of History and Heritage during the writing of the official history of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War. In 2003, he returned to the Black Watch in the position of Regimental Historian and has held teaching positions at John Abbott College in Montreal as well as the University of Ottawa.

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## Endnotes

1. Black Watch Archives (BWA), Black Watch War Diary, September 1944.
2. Ibid; J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, July 2007.
3. Ammunition for the 25-pounder and 5.5-inch field guns were limited to 25 and 10 rounds per gun respectively, while 4.2-inch mortar ammunition was limited to 30 rounds per mortar. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944; David J. Bercuson, *Maple Leaf Against the Axis: Canada's Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart Publications, 1995).
4. BWA, Black Watch War Diary, September 1944.
5. Ibid.
6. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 15,885, War Diary 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance, September 1944.
7. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.
8. BWA, Black Watch War Diary, September 1944.
9. Ibid.
10. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, 2007.
11. J.A.B. Nixon, Notes on a personal interview, February 2004.
12. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007; BWA, letter from Capt John Kemp to Ruth (last name unknown), the fiancée of Sgt Barnard "Barney" Benson, 25 November 1944: "During the last five years I saw a good deal of Barney at Aldershot Nova Scotia, in England and France; he was a course, always a very popular and prominent figure, but it was when we reached France that he really came into his own. He was completely fearless and was an inspiration to every man in the battalion; time and again I have seen him expose himself in order to draw fire from a machine gun that we had been unable to locate and there was no job too difficult or dangerous for Barney to have a try at it. When I heard of his death my first thought was of sorrow at the loss of a friend, and then the more I thought about him the more I realized what his loss meant to the battalion; there are many of us who will never forget 'Benson and his Scouts.'"
13. Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) account by Major Pinkham, OC C Company, of the company attack at Coppenaxfort, given to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944; LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.
14. BWA, letter from Lt. Col. Frank Mitchell to the Commandant, 22 September 1944; LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.
15. BWA, Black Watch War Diary, September 1944; LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.
16. General Von Kluge was the brother of Field Marshal Von Kluge who committed suicide during the final days in Normandy after the German collapse in the Falaise Pocket. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.
17. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.
18. Ibid.
19. BWA, memoirs of Private W.T. Booth.
20. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.
21. Warren Trudeau, Personal interview, March 2004; J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.
22. N.E.G.H. Buch, Personal interview, January 1993.
23. Ibid.
24. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.
25. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 9,879, Battle Experience Questionnaires, Capt (P) Yuile, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, 12 October 1944; according to the War Diary of the 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance, 20 wounded were admitted for treatment on the 11<sup>th</sup>, but there is no indication of killed, missing or prisoners of war. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 15,885, War Diary 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Field Ambulance, September 1944.
26. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 18,826, Statistic and Explanations, 11 December 1956; the Black Watch suffered 307 casualties, 118 fatal and the rest wounded, missing or prisoners of war (POW) during Operation Spring. Just over ten days later on 5 August 1944, two more companies were wiped out attempting to capture May-sur-Orne. See David O'Keefe, "Pushing Their Necks Out: Ultra, the Black Watch and Command Relations, Normandy, August 5<sup>th</sup> 1944,"

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*Canadian Military History* (Spring 2006).

27. BWA, letter dated 26 September 1944 from Lt. Col. Frank Mitchell to Lt. Col. A. Wright.

28. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 9,879, Battle Experience Questionnaires, Maj Alan Carmichael, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, 6 October 1944.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, 2007.

34. DHH account by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, of the company attack at Coppenaxfort, given to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

35. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.

36. DHH account by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, of the company attack at Coppenaxfort, given to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

37. Ibid.

38. BWA, anonymous memoir from a soldier in B Company, circa 1945.

39. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.

40. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.

41. Ibid.

42. J.A.B. Nixon, Notes on a personal interview, March 2004.

43. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.

44. BWA, anonymous memoir from a soldier in B Company, circa 1945.

45. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.

46. Account of a two-company attack at Spycker 2077 by B and C Companies, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, given by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

47. Warren Trudeau, Personal interview, March 2004.

48. Ibid.

49. Account of a two-company attack at Spycker 2077 by B and C Companies, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, given by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

50. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.

51. Ibid.

52. Account of a two-company attack at Spycker 2077 by B and C Companies, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, given by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

53. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007; Warren Trudeau, Personal interview, March 2004.

54. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 9,879, Battle Experience Questionnaires, Maj Alan Carmichael, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, 6 October 1944.

58. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.

59. Ibid.

60. BWA, Black Watch War Diary, September 1944; LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 9,879, Battle Experience Questionnaires, Maj Alan Carmichael, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, 6 October 1944.

61. J.A.B. Nixon, Personal interview, August 2007.

62. Canada Gazette; citation for the Military Medal for Private Frederick De Lutis.

63. Ibid.

64. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, September 1944.

65. Account of a two-company attack at Spycker 2077 by B and C Companies, Royal Highland Regiment of Canada, given by Maj Pinkham, OC C Company, to Capt Engler at Bourbourgville, 17 September 1944.

66. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 14,109, War Diary 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry brigade, September 1944.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 13,751, War Diary 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division, September 1944.

71. After Spycker was retaken from the Germans, 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian War Crimes Investigation Unit was called into investigate a possible atrocity at Spycker. The bodies of Jarvis and the two others killed in the farmhouse area had been tossed into a common grave after the Germans retook the position. Although at first it seemed as though this was yet another case of Canadian prisoners of war being executed at the hands of their German captors, the Black Watch CO at the time, Lt. Col. Bruce Ritchie, concluded that the only atrocity that was committed was in the form of the burial, confirming that the three were indeed killed during and not after the battle as investigators suspected. With this information, the case was closed. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 16,408, War Diary No 1 Canadian War Crimes Investigation Unit.

72. Letter from Lt. Col. Frank Mitchell to the Commandant, 22 September 1944.

73. LAC, Records Group 24, Vol 15,885, War Diary 18th Canadian Field Ambulance, September 1944.



# "JADDEX"

## Major Andrew B. Godefroy, CD Ph.D.



PA-128847

Born 15 August 1919, the legendary Canadian soldier Jacques Alfred Dextraze CC, CMM, CBE, DSO, CD, LLD was affectionately known to his soldiers first as 'Mad Jimmy' and then later simply as 'JADDEX'. Having joined the army in 1940 as a private, he would end his career 37 years later as Chief of the Defence Staff.

Jacques Dextraze received his early education at St. Joseph's College in Berthierville before joining the Dominion Rubber Company as a salesman. During the Second World War, he left his civilian employment and enlisted as a private soldier with the Fusiliers de Mont Royal (FMR) in July 1940, shortly after the fall of France. Showing leadership potential during training was promoted to acting Sergeant, but his first attempt to gain a commission in early 1941 was refused by the regiment.

Nevertheless, he continued to display good natured leadership and great skill, especially in instructing other soldiers. He was eventually commissioned in early 1942, and applied for active service overseas as soon as his officer training was complete.

Lieutenant Dextraze arrived in England just after the Dieppe Raid in August. With his unit decimated in that attack, it fell on him and other new junior officers to rebuild the unit and make it combat ready once more. The resourceful and dedicated young Dextraze applied himself completely to the task, showing great leadership at all times. By June 1944, Dextraze and the FMR were ready for combat.

The FMR landed in France in the first week of July as part of the 6<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Division. It immediately went into action as the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Army was ordered to attack and destroy the remaining German resistance in Normandy and secure positions for the breakout battle that would follow.



PA-146281



On 1 August 1944, Major Dextraze commanded D Company in an attack to capture the church of St. Martin de Fontenay. The church, which was used as an observation post by the enemy, commanded the whole area and threatened the success of further operations of 6th brigade as it dominated a feature that had to be captured to secure the front. D Company took heavy losses in the assault from enemy machine gun and mortar fire which swept the open streets. Realizing that it was vital to keep up the momentum of the attack, Major Dextraze rushed forward and with no regard for his own safety he personally led the assault into the church yard through enemy grenades, rifle, and machinegun fire. A sharp hand-to-hand fight took place, Major Dextraze "setting the example", overwhelmed the enemy and captured the position. Almost immediately the enemy counter-attacked, but Major Dextraze quickly organized the remainder of his men and defeated all efforts against his position. For his tremendous personal leadership and bravery in combat, the army awarded Major Dextraze the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).<sup>1</sup> His men awarded him the title, "Mad Jimmy".

In December 1944 Major Dextraze was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and command of his regiment. He led the FMR through the remainder of the war, earning a second DSO for his leadership in the liberation of the City of Groningen, the Netherlands, on 15 April 1945. The 6th Canadian Infantry Brigade was given the task of clearing the enemy from the centre of Groningen, and the FMR were ordered to clear the eastern half of the city. This involved house to house fighting, as the enemy was determined to hold the position at all costs.

During the early stage of the battle the leading troops were held up by heavy machine gun fire coming from well sited posts. Lieutenant-Colonel Dextraze quickly appreciated that if this condition was allowed to continue the whole plan might well collapse. He went forward immediately to the leading company, formulated a plan to clear the machine gun posts, and personally directed their final destruction. When the right flank company commander was killed, Dextraze raced through enemy fire to reach it, reorganized its attack, and personally led it forward to its objective. Despite intense enemy fire, he forced the Germans from their defenses and forced the surrender of the garrison. Throughout the entire action, Lieutenant-Colonel Dextraze led his battalion forward, and when they were held up, he assisted and encouraged them onto their objective. His resourcefulness, superb courage, and devotion to duty was not only a great inspiration to his men, but the contributing factor to the final surrender of the enemy garrison of Groningen and the completion of the divisional plan.<sup>2</sup>



**General Dextraze**

It was during Lieutenant Colonel Dextraze commanded his unit until the final surrender of Germany, after which he volunteered to lead a battalion in the Canadian infantry division then formed for active service in the Pacific. Japan surrendered in August before Canadians units were deployed, and Dextraze 'retired' to the general reserve officer's list and re-entered to civilian life. His tenure out of uniform was short, however, and in 1950 he returned to active duty as the officer commanding 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Regiment. Dextraze again displayed his tenacious character and leadership at the defence of Hill 355, when his unit was surrounded by the enemy but held off all attacks and refused to surrender the position. In 1952, Lieutenant Colonel Dextraze was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his service in Korea.

After returning from Korea, Dextraze was briefly appointed to the Army Staff College and then to the Land Forces Eastern Area Headquarters. In 1954 he promoted full colonel and made the Chief of Staff of Quebec Command in Montreal. He subsequently served at the Infantry Schools in both Borden and Valcartier, until he returned to command the Quebec Region as a Brigadier in 1962. His tenure there was short, however, as the following year he deployed as the commander of the Canadian contingent as well as the Chief of Staff for the United Nations Operation in the Congo. In early 1964 he organized, coordinated, and led a series of missions under the operational codename 'JADEX' to rescue non-combatants from zones of conflict in theatre, actions which earned him a promotion within the Order of the British Empire to the rank of Commander as well as the award of an oak leaf for gallant conduct.<sup>3</sup>

Upon returning to Canada Dextraze was appointed to command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade where his traditional signature of 'Jadex' on all official correspondence stuck with him as a nickname. In 1966, he was again promoted to Major-General and the position of Deputy Commander of Mobile Command. In 1970, Dextraze was promoted to Lieutenant-General and made Chief of Personnel at National Defence Headquarters. In 1972, Lieutenant-General Jacques Alfred Dextraze was appointed to Chief of the Defence Staff with the rank of full General and made the Commander of the Order of Military Merit. He served as Canada's top soldier until his retirement in 1977, nearly four decades after he joined as a private in the infantry. For his tremendous service to the armed forces and the country he was admitted to the Order of Canada in 1978. When Jacques Alfred Dextraze passed away peacefully on 9 May 1993, the country said a sad goodbye to one of the army's most legendary and outstanding soldiers in its history.

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## Endnotes

1. Recommended for immediate DSO, 5 September 1944, endorsed by Lieutenant-General H.D.G. Crerar, Acting General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, First Canadian Army on 4 November 1944.
2. Recommended for immediate Bar to DSO on 17 April 1945; supported by Headquarters, 6 Canadian Infantry Brigade on 2 May 1945 and passed forward on 30 May 1945.
3. Awarded Commander, Order of the British Empire (CBE) with gallantry oak leaf as per Canada Gazette of 3 October 1964 "For Services with the UN Forces in the Congo" as Commander of the Canadian contingent with the United Nations in the Congo (UNUC).

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## NOTE TO FILE—REACHING INTO THE ORACLE: REFLECTIONS OF A COLD WARRIOR ON THE ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN DEFENCE

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Shaye K. Friesen

In antiquity, individuals sought out the advice of expert advisors at oracular sites such as Delphi or the Temple of Asclepius. For most contemporary defence and security matters, however, advice is gathered from colleagues or immediate co-workers within the same chain of command. The limited availability of subject matter experts and short deadlines required to produce deliverables impose constraints on our ability to consult with experts in the broader defence and security network. Because the Canadian Forces (CF) don't know what they don't know, the benefits of working with other agencies and outside experts, such as transferring experience, developing a network of trust and information sharing, can be squandered.

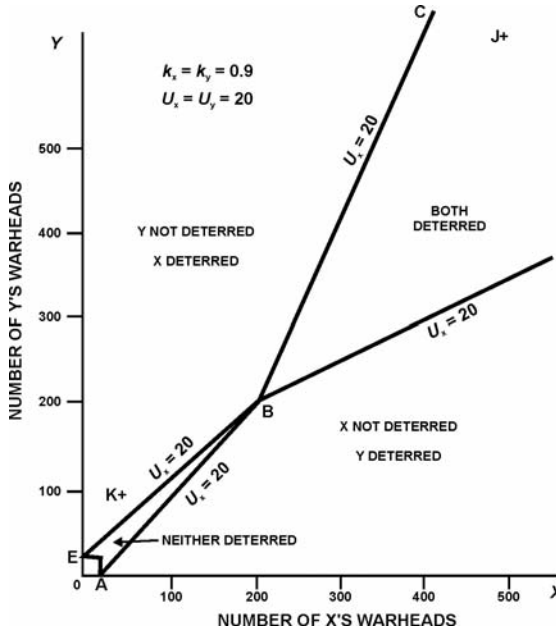
Fortunately, the basic principles of policy and strategy formulation remind us that, when developing a strategy, it is important to create synergy by consulting a larger stable of experts to generate support and develop content. This involves casting as wide a net as possible and engaging in a dialogue and debate that provokes critical thinking before (not after) strategies are developed and implemented. Often the experience and expertise of external advisors yield rich dividends because they are able to shed new light on existing problems and present concepts in innovative ways that have not been previously been considered. Just as the advice from the oracle played an important role helping understand issues ranging from everyday life to geopolitics, so too should we benefit from the specialized knowledge of modern day of subject matter experts.

Enter Dr. George Lindsey. Dr Lindsey served in the Royal Canadian Artillery during the Second World War, and with the British and Canadian Army Operational Research Groups. He later became the Chief of the Operational Research and Analysis Establishment (ORAE) in National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) in 1967, and held this position until his retirement in 1987. During this time, he became one of the most influential people responsible for moulding the direction of Canadian defence science during the Cold War. As 2007 marked the launch of the 60th anniversary of defence science in Canada, it is important to pay tribute and recognize those who have contributed to building defence science. The Centre for Operational Research (CORA) offers a wealth of expertise and brings together different scientific disciplines together that provide enhanced analytical support for the CF. Old-timers such as Dr Lindsey can be used as strategic "force multipliers" on a part time basis, or employed as peer reviewers to ensure the best possible advice is provided to the CF. They may have even encountered similar problems in the past that could lend assistance to priority research areas.

In a time of constant change, it is necessary to pause and gather our thoughts by reflecting on the past, using the past to gain a broader understanding of how people in our organization approached similar problems in the past, and how we can build on this knowledge today. This article unearths some high-level guidelines to better illustrate how contemporary issues and challenges in military operational research (OR) have some historical precedent from which valuable observations, insights and lessons can be drawn. In doing so, it demonstrates how the knowledge and experience of senior members of the defence scientific community can be applied to provide meaningful context and clarification for today's defence and security challenges.

## Background

Dr Lindsey's interest in OR had its origins in the Second World War, and was derived from his personal experiences with the application of radar to air defence.<sup>1</sup> Many countries had started investigating electronic approaches to target detection well before the outbreak of war, but there were practical issues in getting it to be useful for the field.<sup>2</sup> During the Second World War, radar was so secretive that its official title was known as



'electrical methods of fire control,' and it was not discussed in public.<sup>3</sup> Although OR was strongly associated with air defence, it did not take long before many of its techniques were adopted for other applications in the army, navy and air force. The navy exploited the benefits of OR more quickly because of its technical flavour, and the fact that it collected and kept a lot of records, probably due to its isolation at sea.<sup>4</sup> Radar was soon used for fire control as well as detection of both ships and aircraft. The design and application of the radar equipment offered great opportunities for OR of a mathematical as well as experimental nature.

One of the recurring challenges faced by the OR community was that of data availability. The nature of complex problems involving uncertainty, multiple stakeholders and conflicting goals frequently required preliminary studies even to get the data for tool development. In the 1930s and 40s, analysts did not have the luxury of time and had to make a best effort. Dr Lindsey recalled: "OR was always up against the challenge of accessing reliable information and records keeping. Even today, there are always changing players, numbers, rules and methods; what was practical in the 1940s was not applicable by the 1950s. When analysts had enough time to collect reliable data, we had to stop and ask ourselves—is it worth going further to obtain perfect information or will 'good enough' suffice?"<sup>5</sup> The handicap of continuous evolution of the data that is needed for effective analysis of military problems irritated Dr Lindsey enough to redirect some of his research onto the strategy of baseball, a contest for which the rules never change, and for which there is a fervent collection and widespread distribution of statistics.<sup>6</sup>



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In the years after 1945 OR became heavily intertwined in the operational activities and organization of the CF. In the maritime area, a large effort was based in operational units (e.g., Atlantic Command, Maritime Air Command and their successors). OR on air activities was conducted in operational commands (e.g., Air Defence Command, Tactical Air Group, NORAD, 1 Air Division etc). The Canadian Army Operational Research Establishment (CAORE) began in Kingston, but was organizationally part of the Army headquarters.<sup>7</sup> Borrowing from its wartime experience, the build up of OR in the 1950s resulted in the deployment of scientists in small units located with the various field commands of the CF. A major benefit of dispersed field units was to expose junior scientists to the problems, organization and procedures, and objectives of the military.<sup>8</sup> One of the main outcomes that emerged from the formative contributions of OR in Canada has been the intimate cooperation between civilians and the military that has developed.

### **Guideline 1: Adapt the skills of the analyst and use a multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving**

As Dr Lindsey noted, changing requirements over the years forced the skills of the analyst to adapt. This is borne out by the fact that, over the decades since the institutionalization of OR in the military, there has been a gradual shift in the focus of OR, which had its roots in the technical research on equipment, until a large portion of its activities involved systems analysis, policy analysis and eventually strategic studies.<sup>9</sup> A good example of how OR was involved in high level strategic policy analysis is documented in the "Resume of the Military Strategies in the Two World Wars." In this report, Dr Lindsey prophetically anticipated the impending geopolitical shifts of the modern era:

Grand strategy is the direction of all the resources of a nation towards the attainment of the political object of the war. It includes economic and moral as well as military resources, and it includes financial, diplomatic, commercial and ethical as well as military pressure...the developments since World War II are making it more and more important to remember that military strategy is a special case of grand strategy, and that the purpose of military forces is to further the national policy of their country rather than simply to defeat the enemy on the battlefield.<sup>10</sup>

Other areas, such as studies into cost effectiveness and research into management engineering, as well as the link with the systems analysis school of thought, eventually permeated the evolution of Canadian OR through the influence of such figures as R.J. Sutherland.<sup>11</sup> Dr Lindsey recalled that in the early days of OR, the defence department was not as concerned about acquisition cost as planners today: "When authorities decided to buy something, they wanted to know if it did what they wanted it to do."<sup>12</sup> Today, few would deny that one of the primary drivers of acquisition is cost, with the actual capability provided by platforms or systems often being a secondary consideration. In the old days, if the cost of maintaining a particular legacy system was a major concern, equipment was placed in a warehouse or given to support training or the Reserves.<sup>13</sup>

As the problems of defence against intercontinental ballistic missiles mounted, the relationship between the strategy and economics of intercontinental missile defence became a major concern. National Defence planners had begun to examine strategic alternatives for defence against missile attacks. These strategies included analysis of the destruction of missiles in flight and passive defence such as structural hardening, fallout protection, concealment and dispersal, which invariably involved developing the defence community.<sup>14</sup> This experience taught Dr Lindsey to recognize the importance of

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using multi-disciplinary approaches to address problems. For example, he suggested that public security issues involved in protection against domestic terrorism are ripe for researchers with a background in psychology.<sup>15</sup> In the same vein, Arctic security, a topic that is currently *en vogue* in defence circles, is closely linked to CF operations but also has linkages to interdepartmental activities and perspectives that cross multiple jurisdictions. "The military aspect," Dr Lindsey stated, "is only one side of the problem. Other aspects include the role of the economy, environmental changes, search and rescue, Inuit issues and Canadian sovereignty that need to be solved by looking at the matter from a holistic perspective."<sup>16</sup> Although these issues were not always thought of in previous decades, the benefit of adopting such a multi-disciplinary approach is that it brings many different perspectives of the key players to bear on a problem to enhance common understanding, examine options and evaluate implications of those options during all phases.

In the early days of OR, most of the analyses were original and tended to be conducted very close to the actual operational problem under investigation. To be useful, one needed to have a technical background, preferably with a radio or signals application, which an ordinary university graduate would not possess. A lot of the OR work tended to be done on an area or platform that was expanding, such as radar or navigation, and there was an immediate operational requirement for data that did not always exist at the time.<sup>17</sup> Whereas the focus of OR was on evaluating technical performance of equipment, a wide array of disciplines and research areas such as strategic studies, political science, sociology and military history are now used to address military problems. According to Dr Lindsey, greater consideration should be given to 'soft' skills not considered within the traditional realm of defence. Canada's defence relations within NATO and our frequent participation on coalition and multinational operations highlight the importance of language and other 'soft' skills, such as personal interaction and communication, teamwork and leadership. The multinational character of NATO implies that there should be a shift in the focus of professional development in the recruits that enter the military: "not being able to understand or speak the same language is a terrible handicap. We need to have an understanding of the basics."<sup>18</sup>

## **Guideline 2: Design capabilities with the widest possible objective in mind**

As the CF finds itself operating in a security environment that can be characterized as complex and volatile, it is important to stimulate discussion and debate on a continual basis as to the nature, choices and reasons underpinning Canada's defence strategy. For example, the Canadian Navy became a great maritime power in the Second World War largely because of its anti-submarine warfare (ASW) role, which included OR work on sonar and research by the National Research Council (NRC) on ship design.<sup>19</sup> With the war over, and the Soviets undertaking a massive submarine building program, a key question arose: should the Canadian Navy retain its traditional focus by concentrating on ASW, or should more emphasis be placed on versatility, such as combating strategic ballistic missile submarines, escorting convoys, sealift, close support of ground forces and/or mine countermeasures?<sup>20</sup>

At several points in CF history, the military either disposed of, or was on the verge of divesting itself of, equipment only to find itself in a position of trying to re-acquire similar capabilities down the road (at a much greater cost) in order to maintain a contribution to world affairs. Canada's long and sordid tale with acquiring search and rescue helicopters in the 1990s stands out as a recent example in modern memory. In order to avoid repeating this situation, Dr Lindsey maintained that it might be necessary to think about several different uses for a platform, system or capability versus a single

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narrow application. "If aircraft are designed to carry out ASW tasks, then they cannot always be re-tooled fast enough to accomplish other missions," Dr Lindsey noted.<sup>21</sup> Given the huge amount of resources required to acquire and maintain personnel and equipment, this prompts a fundamental question: should the CF have a more general-purpose force structure that can quickly be retrofitted to fulfill several different roles, especially if an operation could take place in any environment, from a desert or even in the Arctic? There is potential wastage inherent in designing a resource intensive force structure for scenarios that are unlikely to occur: "The cost of being ready may involve putting certain capabilities into warehouses. Investment in a broad range of capabilities may actually dilute effectiveness, especially if we do not have enough human resources on hand. If the CF is going to spend a lot of money, they should probably choose equipment that can be used in a number of different ways."<sup>22</sup>

That the CF must continually examine whether it pursues specialized capabilities or capabilities with a general application should not be limited to a national context. Rather, it should be extended to consider allied force developments as well. In 1965, in a report entitled "The Allocation of Resources in an Alliance," Dr Lindsey sought to determine optimum allocations by the individual member countries of infantry, tanks and landing craft to determine the overall effectiveness of an alliance. The cost of modern weapon systems reached levels such that smaller countries, such as Canada, could no longer maintain balanced forces, and were obliged to abstain from major military roles. Since individual member countries tended to pursue capabilities independently on the basis of national interest, Dr Lindsey argued that there needed to be an arrangement to coordinate the development of an optimum force structure for the benefit of NATO.<sup>23</sup> In terms of the current defence relationship within NATO, the CF seems small in comparison to the US, but it is not the smallest country in the alliance. If CF operations are predominantly undertaken with other large forces as part of a coalition and with the aid of allies, Dr Lindsey suggested that we may want to revisit the way in which decisions to purchase and operate weapon systems in the context of their overall utility for an alliance of like-minded nations: "Perhaps we should pursue stronger ties with the Norwegians or the Dutch, who are Middle Powers just like Canada with support from the US instead of pursuing solutions through a large numbers of nations through NATO."<sup>24</sup>

Investing in capabilities that are able to perform more than one function offers a potential way in which the CF can be ready for a broad range of missions across the conflict spectrum. Because the geography of Canada (the second largest country in the world) is vast, and we have a relatively small population that is concentrated along the US border, there is an enormous amount of unmonitored territory. Numerous technological developments in remote sensing have made it possible to monitor air, land and sea from airborne or space-based platforms (e.g., satellites, unmanned vehicles, aircraft etc). Overhead surveillance capabilities, for instance, could be deployed overseas on little notice, benefit the aeronautical industry and minimize the requirement for massive investments in personnel and training. Such capabilities would provide increased knowledge of activities in Canadian territory, and aid in enforcing fishing laws, detecting pollution, and search and rescue while maintaining sovereignty.<sup>25</sup> Beyond domestic roles, overhead surveillance could be used on current operations and to defend against terrorism. According to Dr Lindsey, the speed and mobility of today's adversaries, their ability to blend in with surroundings and number of objects requiring discrimination,<sup>26</sup> makes overhead surveillance a prime candidate for the missions such as the one in Afghanistan: "Suicide bombers are connected to overhead surveillance, which can be used to see if there is suspicious activity at night or over specific areas. This would also be important for 'catching them in the act'."<sup>27</sup>

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**Guideline 3: Develop partnerships with non-traditional allies; solutions may not always involve the application of force**

Dr Lindsey used the example of Canada's involvement in Afghanistan to illustrate this guideline. Operations in Afghanistan draw attention to the requirement of "knowing the enemy," including its capabilities and intentions, and to planning operations on the footbed of good intelligence. He suggested that the situation in Afghanistan seems more confused than it should be, and that the CF could do more in Afghanistan by developing partnerships with non-traditional allies: "Maybe the solution lies outside the military. For example, can we find out what the 'good' Muslims think about the situation; those who do not want to get blown up and are interested in problem solving?"<sup>28</sup> He suggested that Muslim communities participate in discussions regarding governance challenges with the Government of Canada, which would facilitate our ability to understand what the requirements of the local population, the local security forces and their need, versus telling them what we are going to do to them if they do not cooperate. This, he argued, would be an active area of research for psychologists or those involved in personal behaviour analysis.<sup>29</sup>

With the importance of sending the right people (not just armed forces) to prosecute a counter-insurgency campaign being recognized as common to successful counter-insurgencies,<sup>30</sup> Dr Lindsey maintained that Canadian police and constabulary forces, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), could be used to support more tasks and reinforce the mission. In addition, Dr Lindsey suggested that there is a need to examine the system of trust, and understand on the nature of the counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, including its cultural, political and geographic context: "The mistake by the US in Iraq was that they abolished the army after they invaded. We need to find out more on how to support Afghan locals, not look down at them through the barrel of a gun."<sup>31</sup> Canada's strategy in Afghanistan is based upon assisting and enabling the Afghan people to rebuild their country along three 'pillars' of activity that are consistent with the "Afghan Compact," namely Security, Governance (rule of law, Human Rights) and Economic and Social Development.<sup>32</sup> This reinforces the notion that military operations are part of a coordinated and integrated approach among communities responsible for diplomacy, defence and development.

**Guideline 4: Synthesize the "so what" of emerging issues, concepts and technologies**

In a 1950s issue of the *Canadian Army Journal*, Dr Lindsey wrote an article on "The Roles of Radar." The purpose of this article was to outline the basic relationships that determined the performance of a radar set, and to show how many of the features conflict with each other.<sup>33</sup> But the role of the analyst is much larger than this: he must be able to articulate emerging developments in science and technology (S&T), changes in the geo-political environment and strategic concepts in such a way as to highlight the potential opportunities, limitations and implications in the context of military requirements. Extending the scientific frontiers of knowledge is not always a mandatory requirement for influencing the military combat development process or field operations. While OR analyses must be timely and relevant, lengthy dissertations are not required for problems requiring an immediate answer. In other words, it is not necessary to develop a program when all that is required is a 'quick-look' assessment.

Besides acting as a "strategic sensor" in tracking and monitoring emerging developments and trends, one of the roles of the OR analyst is to realize the potential application of a new subject, acting as what Dr Lindsey referred to as an "education

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assistant” for the military.<sup>34</sup> The role of OR is to bring to the attention the technical, political and strategic aspects to the military of technology, such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or stealth technology. It is important to introduce and cover these issues so that clear deductions can be made regarding military utility. For example, the “Information Requirements for Aerospace Defence” is what Dr Lindsey referred to as a “good example of an OR group working within a HQ environment.”<sup>35</sup> This document involved identifying and capturing requirements, gaps and deficiencies—it may not be OR in the purist sense of the word, but it is vital to explain trends, threats and opportunities of a subject in a clear, concise and timely manner.<sup>36</sup> The content and presentation of material derived from these studies can be used to educate Commanders and staff, and can have a substantial influence on defence policy and planning.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

A strategic partnering approach that builds on core competencies in data collection and assessment, strategic analysis, wargaming and force structure analysis are keys to the success of most OR activities. Often, there is a need to identify and employ special advisors and research personnel with a wide variety of backgrounds (in educational disciplines, training and experience). In order to affect military outcomes, they must be able and willing to collaborate, explain and combine their ideas. Equipment organization should be designed to be able to undertake a wide variety of useful services, and attention should be paid to the investigation of the possible future capabilities of emerging technologies, such as UAVs, space communications and overhead surveillance. Small and medium sized countries (like Canada), which belong to an international alliance with military responsibilities, should seek to combine their roles with those of other carefully chosen small and medium sized partners.

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## Endnotes

1. For background, see George Lindsey, “Some Personal Recollections of Army Operational Research on Radar in World War II,” *Canadian Military History*, Vol.5, No.2 (Autumn 1995), pp. 69-74.
2. W.C. Brown, “Wartime Radar Research and Development by the National Research Council of Canada: Recollections and a Tribute,” in George R. Lindsey, (ed.), *No Day Long Enough: Canadian Science in World War II* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1997), p. 41.
3. Interview, Dr George R. Lindsey, 14 April 2007, Ottawa, ON.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. See for example, his G.R. Lindsey, “Statistical Data Useful for the Operation of a Baseball Team,” *Operations Research* Vol.7, No.2 (March-April 1959), pp. 197-207; George Lindsey, “Managing the Expos to the world’s championship,” *Optimum*, Vol.2, No.1 (1971), pp. 23-28
7. OR studies into areas such as survival, ballistic missile defence, military use of space, arms control and logistics are described in: G.R. Lindsey, *Eighteen Years of Military Operational Research in Canada*, ORD Informal Paper No. 67/P10 (Ottawa: National Defence, Operational Research Division, December 1967).
8. G. Lindsey, “Four good decades of OR in the Canadian Department of National Defence,” *Journal of the Operational Research Society* No. 49 (1998), p. 329.
9. See George R. Lindsey “Operational research and systems analysis in the Department of National Defence,” *Optimum*, Vol.3, No.2 (1972).
10. This report reflects the evolution of strategic thinking and considers the meaning of military strategy in a much broader context. See G.R. Lindsey, *A Resume of the Military Strategies in the Two World Wars*, ORD Informal Paper No. 65/P14 (Ottawa: Defence Research Analysis Establishment, August 1965), p. 14.
11. After serving the Canadian Armoured Corps in World War II, and obtaining a PhD in economics, Dr Sutherland rose to Chief of the Operational Research Division until his untimely death in 1967. For a good example of the analysis of the economic relationship and defence, consult: R.J. Sutherland, *Cost/Effectiveness and Defence Management: Mr. Macnamara’s Pentagon*, ORD Informal Paper No. 66/P21 (Ottawa: National Defence, Operational Research Division, September 1966).
12. Interview, op. cit.



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13. Ibid.
  14. G.R. Lindsey, *Strategy and Economics of Intercontinental Missile Defence*, ORD Informal Paper No. 66/P23 (Ottawa: National Defence, Operational Research Division, October 1966).
  15. Interview, op. cit.
  16. Ibid.
  17. Ibid.
  18. Ibid.
  19. For an outstanding treatment on Canadian science in the Second World War involving the first-hand contributions of war-time scientists, see George R. Lindsey, (ed.), *No Day Long Enough*.
  20. For more information on this topic, see: G. R. Lindsey, *Canadian Maritime Strategy: Should the Emphasis be Change?* DRAE Report no. 5 (Ottawa: Defence Research Analysis Establishment, July 1969).
  21. Interview, op. cit.
  22. Ibid.
  23. G. R. Lindsey, *The Allocation of Resources in an Alliance*, ORD Informal Paper No. 65/P13 (Ottawa, National Defence, Operational Research Division, August 1965).
  24. Interview, op. cit.
  25. George Lindsey, "Potential contributions by the Canadian Armed Forces to the defence of North America against terrorism," *International Journal* Vol. LVIII, No. 3 (Summer 2003), pp-309-334.
  26. If reports on targets are intermittent, non-continuous and it is difficult to get an exact "fix" on the target's location because of limitations in seeing through clutter such as clouds, there may be intermittent signals that can be exploited to see objects. See George R. Lindsey, "Interception Strategy based on Intermittent Information," *Operations Research* Vol.16, No. 3 (May-June 1968), pp. 489-508.
  27. Interview, op. cit.
  28. Ibid.
  29. Ibid.
  30. Kalev I. Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* (May-June 2005), pp. 8-12.
  31. Interview, op. cit.
  32. "Building on Success: The London Conference on Afghanistan 31 January—1 February 2006: The Afghanistan Compact," Available at: [http://www.unama-afg.org/news/\\_LondonConf/\\_docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf](http://www.unama-afg.org/news/_LondonConf/_docs/06jan30-AfghanistanCompact-Final.pdf)
  33. G.R. Lindsey, "The Roles of Radar," *Canadian Army Journal* Vol.5, No.11 (February 1952), pp. 17-31.
  34. Interview, op. cit.
  35. Ibid.
  36. George Lindsey, *The Information Requirements for Aerospace Defence: The Limits Imposed by Geometry and Technology*, Bailrigg Memorandum 27 (Lancaster University: Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, 1997).
  37. For example, Dr Lindsey used the example of how a family of two-dimensional charts linking numbers of weapons to deterrence strategies facilitated the ability of the analyst to convey a message and explore possibilities. The relationships between strategic nuclear warheads, deterrence and Canadian security are recurring themes in Dr Lindsey's writings. For a more detailed explanation of the charts, consult: George Lindsey, *Strategic Nuclear Weapons: Fewer Would Be Better but Zero Would Be Imprudent* (Waterloo: The Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies, ND). George R. Lindsey, *The Strategic Defence of North America* (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1986) contains insights on strategic nuclear deterrence developments.

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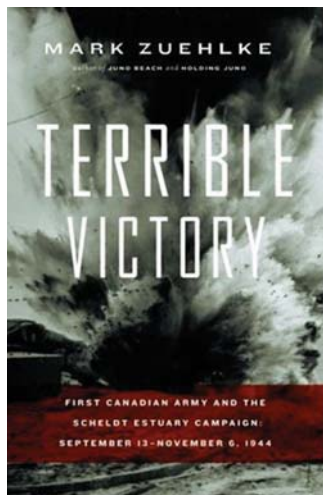
# — BOOK REVIEWS —

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## **TERRIBLE VICTORY: FIRST CANADIAN ARMY AND THE SCHELDT ESTUARY: SEPTEMBER 13, NOVEMBER 6, 1944**

ZUELHKE, Mark. Douglas & McIntyre, 2007, 545 pages. \$37.95

**Reviewed by 2Lt Thomas Fitzgerald, 2 Irish R of C**



By September 1944, the war in Europe appeared won. The Allies, having stormed ashore at Normandy, had succeeded in encircling, destroying and routing the German army. In the pursuit that followed, the Allies had bounced the Seine River and were moving rapidly towards Germany. In the North, Brussels had fallen to the British Second Army on September 2, Antwerp, two days later. But in this success lay the seeds for, arguably, an unnecessary and bloody campaign—the Battle of the Scheldt Estuary, brilliantly and meticulously analyzed in Mark Zuehlke's "Terrible Victory: First Canadian Army and the Scheldt Estuary Campaign."

By the fall of 1944, the Allies were in grave trouble. "The Pursuit" of the previous summer had stalled due to logistical problems—the Allies were still trucking supplies in from the Normandy beaches, hundreds of miles from the front lines. There was dissension in the top command regarding how to conclude the war. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery favoured a narrow thrust across the northern German plain, while the Americans, under the command of General Omar Bradley favoured a broad front approach to Germany. Montgomery won the argument leading to the disastrous Operation MARKET GARDEN, vividly portrayed in the movie, "A Bridge Too Far", from the book of the same name. Finally, relations between Montgomery and General H.D.G. Crerar, Commander of the First Canadian Army, while never warm, had particularly soured due in part, to Montgomery's inability to recognize Crerar as a thoroughly Canadian general and not simply a dominion general.

By October 1944, with the failure of MARKET GARDEN and the Supreme Command's insistence that the port of Antwerp be opened, Montgomery switched priorities and directed the Scheldt Estuary be cleared. The plan for opening the estuary was devised by Lieutenant General Guy Simmonds (General Crerar had left for England on medical leave) and consisted of four phases:

- ◆ clearing the area north of Antwerp and securing access to South Beveland;
- ◆ reduction of the Breskens Pocket, north of Antwerp (Operation SWITCHBACK);
- ◆ capture of South Beveland (Operation VITALITY); and
- ◆ the capture of Walcheren Island (Operation INFATUATE).

Relying on primary and secondary sources and interviews with the survivors, Zuehlke paints a vivid picture of the plight and the bravery of the Canadian soldiers in the battle that should not have been fought. From the insane (the near destruction of the Canadian Highland Regiment (the Black Watch) at Woensdrecht on "Black Friday")

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to the incredible (the South Beveland race between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade) to the heroic (the assault by the Calgary Highlanders, the Highland Regiment of Canada and the Regiment de Maisonneuve across the Walcheren causeway) to the humorous (the meeting between the Royal Regiment of Canada and the British 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade), Zuehlke writes compellingly and passionately about those autumn months when the Allied victory hung in the balance.

The campaign started off innocently enough. An infantry battalion (it was always the “poor bloody infantry” in the Scheldt campaign), the Algonquin Regiment from North Bay, Ontario tried to establish a beach head across the Leopold Canal, which if successful, would have permitted the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Armoured Division to move northward and reduce the Breskens Pocket, clearing the southern bank of the West Scheldt. But like similar battles, faulty intelligence, poor weather and terrible ground (it was always the ground) forced the withdrawal of the Algonquin Regiment leading to a series of slow, costly set piece battles. By November 8, and 6367 dead later, the Scheldt Estuary was cleared and Antwerp was open to great celebration (though no Canadian was invited to the festivities).

The Scheldt campaign was the story of the Canadian soldier. In “Terrible Victory”, as he has done in the past<sup>1</sup>, Zuehlke recounts it through the eyes of the infanteer, the tanker or the gunner. The narration is fast paced and vivid. Unlike some military historians, the author has a knack for clear, concise writing even when describing the movement of various units. The reviewer has two small observations. First, the book is largely written from the perspective of the battalion commander and below. Perhaps to provide greater context to the campaign, some expanded discussion about the interaction between division and corps, corps and army, army and army group commander might have occurred. Second, notwithstanding the clarity of the narrator, greater use of maps particularly at the battalion or brigade level and their proper placement would have been of assistance.

This is a well written and extremely well researched book. Reading it would give anyone a great sense of pride in the Canadian soldier who fought well against a veteran, well supplied foe. It rightfully joins its place with others on the same subject<sup>2</sup>. The Scheldt campaign was for Canada, a terrible victory.

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## Endnotes

1. Ortona: *Canada's Epic World War II Battle*, Toronto, Douglas & McIntyre, 1999; *The Liri Valley: Canada's World War II Breakthrough to Rome*, Toronto, Stoddard, 2001, *The Gothic Line: Canada's Month of Hell in World War II Italy*, Toronto, Douglas & McIntyre, 2003, *Juno Beach: Canada's D-Day Victory*, Toronto, Douglas & McIntyre, 2004.
2. Copp, Terry *Cinderella Army: The Canadians in North West Europe, 1944-1945*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006, Whitaker, W. Denis and Whitaker, Sheilagh, *Tug of War: The Canadian Victory that Opened Antwerp*, Toronto, Stoddard, 1984.

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## CALEPIN D'ESPOIR

DUFRESNE, Danielle and DUFRESNE, Emilien (Cahiers du Septentrion, 2003) paper, 136 pages, ISBN 2-89448-346-5.

**Reviewed by Lieutenant-Colonel R.S. Williams, MSM CD**



Little known is the war service of the many young rural Quebecers who took part in the Second World War. It is truly fortunate that Mr. Dufresne decided with the support of his daughter Danielle to finally record, sixty years after his experiences, his thoughts and feelings throughout the war, which include a period in German captivity after having being captured in the aftermath of the Normandy campaign. Neither has much been written about the long, and for many, fatal marches that Allied POWs were forced to endure as prisoner of war camps were evacuated and moved back and forth across the remains of the Third Reich in the last year of the war.

The early chapters of this first person narrative, written in French, detail how young Emilien Dufresne from Pointe-a-la-Fregate in the Gaspé went about joining the army and describe his initial impressions of military life. The fascinating and thought provoking narrative is very readable for those whose second language is French. This part of the narrative includes the timeless anecdotes that typify the training experiences of young men preparing to go off to war. The personal vignettes deal with homesickness, road trips, and the not always understanding reactions of officers and senior non-commissioned officers. All of these events, personal and often painful to relate even years after the event, are dealt with in a tasteful and at times poignant or amusing narrative.

This book is especially timely given the dwindling number of surviving French Canadian veterans who took part in the Second World War as private soldiers. Mr. Dufresne's first-hand experience in one of these horrific and senseless marches across an already defeated but not yet surrendered Germany provide a glimpse of the memories that he has been carrying all these years. Were it not for books such as this one, the accomplishments of many of Quebec's finest young men would remain unknown, perhaps forever.

I highly recommend this book to all those interested in the experiences of those young men from all walks of life and all parts of Canada whose patriotism and/or thirst for adventure led them to join the Canadian Army in the cause for freedom over sixty years ago. This first person narrative will be hard to put down and can be easily read in one sitting. A reader familiar with today's Canadian Army will soon realize that soldiers have a great deal in common regardless of the era in which they wore their uniform.

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## THE CANADIAN BATTLEFIELDS IN ITALY: ORTONA & THE LIRI VALLEY

MCGEER, Eric with SYMES, Matt. Waterloo: Laurier Centre for Military, paper, 112 pages. ISBN (13) 978-0-9783441-0-8. \$28.00 CAD.

### Review by Major John R. Grodzinski, CD

This is the first of three guidebooks to Canadian battlefields in Italy to be published by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies (LCMSDS) and edited by Terry Copp, Professor Emeritus of History at Wilfred Laurier University and Director of the LCMSDS. He may be more familiar to readers of this journal as author of several studies on the army in North-West Europe, including the recent *Cinderella Army: The Canadians in North West Europe*.

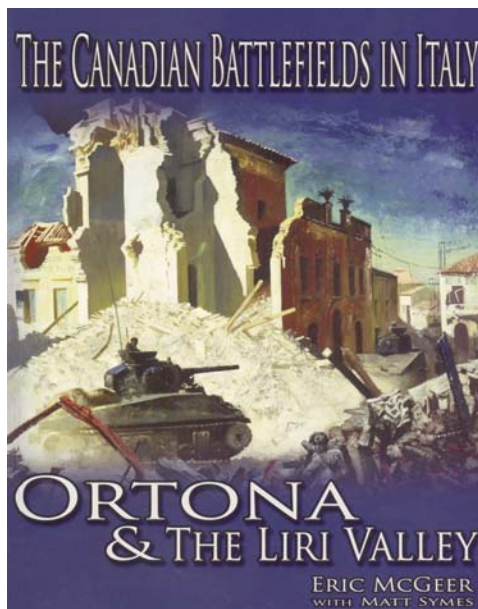
Battlefield guidebooks have been produced for years and Professor Copp is no stranger to the genre, having produced two excellent guides to battlefields in North-West Europe. Other examples include the famous *Major & Mrs Holt's Pocket Battlefield Guides* and the excellent *Battleground Europe* series. The utility of these guides lies in providing a good

general overview of a campaign or battle and other information useful for conducting a tour of the sites described in the text, along with travel information, accommodation advice and other tips. They are the sort of thing one would thumb through while driving around the countryside looking for some point from a battle. Short text and lots of maps and images give these guides their value.

The battle for Ortona and the Liri Valley campaign are two particularly fascinating campaigns with which to launch this series. Ortona involved a difficult division level struggle through very some very tough ground, culminating in an epic fight to clear a town; while the Liri Valley campaign was the first corps level operation conducted by the Canadian Army during the Second World War and played a significant part of a massive allied effort to destroy a German field army and take Rome.

Eric McGeer, who wrote the text, received his doctorate from the Université de Montréal and currently teaches Latin and history at St Clement's School in Toronto. He has written on warfare and law in mediaeval Byzantium and more recently has focused on Canadian war cemeteries of the Second World War and their commemorative inscriptions. Matt Symes is a freelance photographer whose work appears in this book.

The two campaigns in this guide include an introduction, historical narrative and tour itinerary. Both are well illustrated with period photographs of commanders, soldiers, vehicles and specific aspects of each battle, along with selected artwork from the Beaverbrook Collection of War Art. Contemporary photographs show other points of interest and Commonwealth War Grave Commission cemeteries. It would have been helpful to provide specific locations of some buildings shown in the photographs, such





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as a "Villa Rogati dwelling" (p. 38) used by several Patricias to seek refuge; the text was not clear on its location.

There are no maps in the conventional sense. Images from Google Earth have been modified to depict major unit or formation movements using lines drawn over the satellite imagery. This at first seems a wonderful innovation, but upon closer examination is not. These cover large areas of land and few of the modern major roadways are identified. Moreover, specific stands and sites described in the text appear as large blobs covering large areas, of little use to a battlefield tourist trying to navigate from a car or bus. If the intent were to provide a bird's eye view, then using photographic maps similar to those produced after the Second World War for the official histories, would be of much greater utility, especially as they show the ground more or less as it appeared and not with 60 years plus of urban development. In addition, the reproduction technique does not lend itself to sharpness, causing much detail to be lost. This reminds me of a comment made by a veteran of the Liri Valley, who during an interview described the gridded aerial photographs of the Liri Valley he received to aid navigation. These also lacked sharpness and gave a deceiving perspective of the lay of the land; they were soon discarded for conventional maps. To be fair, most other guidebooks do not have detailed maps, but they tend to make good use of period or sketch maps to orient the user to the battlefield and help in moving from point to point. These don't, although the map of the town of Ortona, covering a much smaller area than the others, is good.

Without good sketch maps, the driving instructions in this book can be confounding. For example, rather than using more conventional, helpful terms like "drive west" or "look to the southeast..." the tour for Ortona states at one point, "return to the road and continue towards Frisa. You will soon see a sign for Caldari where you will turn sharply to the right. Before you do, find a vantage point near the turn and look across at Villa Rogati. A little to the right, you will see a cluster of houses on a spur jutting forward from Villa Torre" (p. 38). Using these directions in conjunction with the Google Earth maps, where Frisa, Caldari, Villa Rogati and Villa Torre are but blobs on a photograph, while bouncing along the Italian countryside, would be enough to send the battlefield tourist into the nearest gas station in search of a Michelin map.

Despite these criticisms, there is considerable merit in the book, which provides good synopses of each campaign. There are some curious usages, such as describing Captain Paul Triquet's Victoria Cross action at Casa Berardi as "winning the 'gold medal'" (p. 43). There are also minor editorial oversights, including typos and the employment of the 24-hour system as used in Quebec rather than the military system (12h00 vs 1200h), but then these are minor observations.

The travel information includes many useful tips and offers a selection of accommodation and dining locations, along with related websites. The list of suggested reading is excellent. Most guidebooks are produced in a smaller format so they can fit in a pocket or pouch of a bag, whereas this series is a larger size format (8 ½" x 11"), which people may find difficult to use in the field.

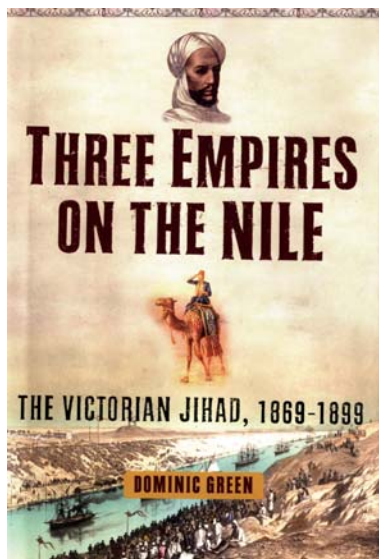
Overall, the first volume of this series is a good effort. The battle synopses, tour itineraries and travel information are well done and useful. The only serious failing is the type of map employed. A more effective guidebook could have been achieved by focusing more on guidance and less on glossiness.

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## THREE EMPIRES ON THE NILE: THE VICTORIAN JIHAD, 1869-1899

GREEN, Dominic. Free Press, 2007. HC, 328.

Reviewed by Major Andrew B. Godefroy CD, PhD



We are all inclined to accept that too often history repeats itself and if one is a believer of this axiom then Domic Green's 'Three Empires on the Nile' was specifically crafted to portray it. Examining what he has coined as 'The Victorian Jihad, 1869-1899', Green takes the reader through a fascinating examination of the rise and fall of the Islamic empire formed in the Sudan under the self-proclaimed messiah known as the Mahdi.

Beginning with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, Green traces the roots and rise of hostilities in the region and its ultimate clash with European powers. What makes this book both different and enjoyable to read, is that much of the text is written from either the Sudanese or Egyptian point of view while still intertwining significant events and decision points made in both Britain and France. Too often this story is told from the sights of the British government under Disraeli or Gladstone or even the British high command, so it is refreshing to examine these conflicts more from 'the other side of the hill'.

Broken into several smaller chapters (11 in all), Green takes the reader step by step through the arrival of European influences in early modern Egypt and Sudan, the proclamation and rise of the Mahdi, and his eventual clash with Egyptian, Sudanese, and finally British forces. For those unfamiliar with this period in history, the reader will discover just how brutal and unforgiving conflict was in this region both prior to the arrival of Europeans as well as after their settlements and intervention. For example, Green is careful to explain the scope and magnitude of the indigenous slave trade in Africa and its influence in the exacerbation of conflict between Egyptians, Sudanese, and Arabic peoples. The numbers of slaves being taken annually for eastern destinations are simply massive compared to those shipped to the west. According to Green's research, these and other related events during this period form the deep roots of conflict that are still being waged today in the war-torn regions of the Sudan and its surrounding neighbours, and may have played a greater role in that conflict than any western influence or intervention.

Though Green has not offered anything particularly new in terms of primary evidence or sources, he has effectively crafted a very readable and engaging history that will make excellent reading for those with a general interest in the period or about the roots of modern Islamic jihad. He is also not afraid to critically examine traditionally sacrosanct figures in British military history such as Charles 'Chinese' Gordon, General Sir Horatio Herbert Kitchener, the young Winston Churchill, or even Major General Hector MacDonald. His dispassionate analysis of both these figures and many of the leaders of the Egyptian and Sudanese armies is refreshing and adds considerable contextual clarity to the telling of the overall story. He provides a good general account of the battle of Omdurman though makes some mistakes in the details. For example, he

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writes that the charge of the 21<sup>st</sup> lancers, "...was the last cavalry charge in the history of the British Army."<sup>1</sup> Green also implies that the British commanders at Omdurman were tactically inept, and won the battle more by luck than skill of arms. Such an assessment is unsupported by existing evidence.

Overall, however, Dominic Green has succeeded in making the events of Egypt and the Sudan in the late nineteenth century relevant to those studying conflict in the region during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. A concise and enjoyable read, this book is recommended for those interested in the history of Islamic conflict and its connection to modern affairs.

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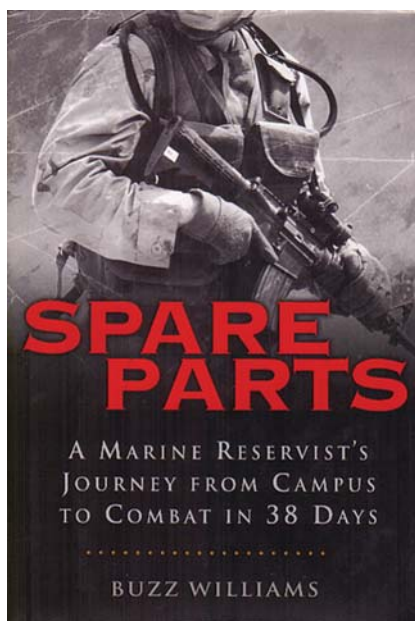
## Note

1. Dominic Green. *Three Empires on the Nile: The Victorian Jihad, 1869-1899*, 261.
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## SPARE PARTS: A MARINE RESERVIST'S JOURNEY FROM CAMPUS TO COMBAT IN 38 DAYS

WILLIAMS, Buzz. New York, Gotham Books, Published by Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2004, 303 pages. \$39.00

### Reviewed by Warrant Officer David Turnbull



Most accounts of military service have come from the pen of officers. Although there are exceptions, most Non-Commissioned Members (NCMs) do not put their experiences to paper for the sake of posterity. It is even rarer for the Reservist, or part-time soldier, whether an officer or NCM, to do so. That is why it is a positive development that Buzz Williams has chosen to write about his experience as a Marine Reservist and his participation in the Gulf War of 1990-91.

Why is this important to us as Canadian soldiers? With the large amount of Reservist participation in United Nations (UN) missions and operational tours (past, present and future), it is important to understand their world. Although written from an American experience, careful attention to the events can provide a level of understanding to the Canadian Reserve experience. The author is in a unique position to provide reflection on the Reserve experience. He served as a Light Armoured Crewman for five of his six years of service; this included active service

in the Gulf War as a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) driver. Ultimately he became the Company Master Gunner, the Company Subject Matter Expert (SME) on LAV gunnery for his Marine Reserve unit.

What gives the book its depth is the academic background that Buzz Williams has. He completed his Bachelor of Education Degree (B.ED.) at Towson State University and subsequently became a National Teacher of the Year award winner. Following his retirement from the Marine Reserve he enrolled in the Master's program at Johns Hopkins. He is currently a secondary school administrator with the Harford County Public Schools in Maryland.

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The book has four parts capped with a prologue and epilogue. In the prologue, Williams answers why he was ultimately drawn to the Marines and what the myth of being a Marine meant to him. The first part of the book follows his trials and tribulations of his recruit training, more commonly known as Boot Camp. The second part deals with his coming to terms with the life of being a Reservist. The third part of the book is the bulk of the book and it deals with his experience of being activated for service in the First Gulf War, and his return home. In fact, it is in this part that the title of the book comes from and the story behind it goes directly to the perception of conflict that is often part of Regular/Active Forces and Reserve Forces working together. The last part of the book is the shortest, but it covers the greatest passage of time as far as the story of Buzz Williams. It covers the last four years of his Marine Reserve service and his entry into the teaching profession. The epilogue covers, in brief, his decision to leave the Marine Reserves and the further development of his civilian career. In the end, we are left in no doubt that Buzz Williams is still a Marine at heart.

The story captures the effective storytelling ability of Williams but also the range of emotions he experienced. The book is entertaining and effectively tells the story of Buzz Williams as a Marine Reservist. Williams communicates the experience of a Reservist while holding nothing back. He illustrates this in his descriptions of Boot Camp, when he felt he had earned the respect of his Drill Instructor only to be singled out by him when he was advanced to the next graduating recruit class to ensure his completion of his recruit training in time for his next semester of school. The resulting ostracism, he felt, effectively demonstrates the highs and lows of Reserve service. In many ways his story of Boot Camp captures the Reservist experience, (which Williams very effectively portrays): the effort to earn respect only to lose it for being identified as a Reservist. This is an example of what happens within the military community; the civilian world brings its own trials and tribulations, which Williams addresses as well.

The Reservist also experiences this lack of understanding from the civilian side of his/her world. Williams illustrates this with an extreme example of some of the university professors he dealt with on his return from the Gulf. Some were prepared to compromise and assist him in meeting the academic requirements he had missed as a result of his deployment, while others could not hide their hostility. The case of one professor is particularly cited (page 266-7). In many ways the insulated world of the Regular Forces due to its geographic locations around Canada is protected from this hostility that in many cases the Reservist is confronted with as the only visible member of the military establishment available for someone to reach out and attack.

Williams also illustrates the problem that the Reservist has after any part-time military training, the matter of winding down and the transition to the civilian world. Because of the nature of Reserve training, packing a lot of training objectives into a minimal amount of time, this in most cases ultimately leads to little or no sleep. In the case of Williams, this resulted in a post-exercise car crash. This incident is a realistic example faced by a Reservist who rapidly moves between the two worlds of the military and civilian. Williams also touches on the difficulty of meeting expectations in both worlds. One example is in his return from Boot Camp where he continues the practice of a locker layout much to the confusion of his mother who cannot understand this focus on minute details.

Williams telling of the Reserve experience is not without weakness. The number of Reservists who chose to release from the Marine Reserves after the First Gulf War would provide a context to his discussion when Williams talks about the numbers who release from his own Marine Reserve Company. He talks about the sense of loss when he started parading with his Reserve Company and the fact familiar faces were not there, they had released. The sense of abandonment by Williams is convincingly told but if he had provided definitive numbers not only for his company but also for the Marine

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Reserves the reader could put this into a contextual understanding. As well, if Williams could have provided reasons for the releases, this would have helped the reader's understanding why so many released. A Canadian comparison is readily available. Review the number of Reservists who release within one year after doing an overseas tour, would we find a similar experience for our Reserves?

The issue of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Williams again does not provide the numbers to illustrate the context of the problem and how it affected his own experience. Is he the minority or is the problem greater than we realize? By providing greater detail to this, Williams could have brought a greater understanding to this issue and may have provided insight to those who are in a position to influence policy as it affects Reservists.

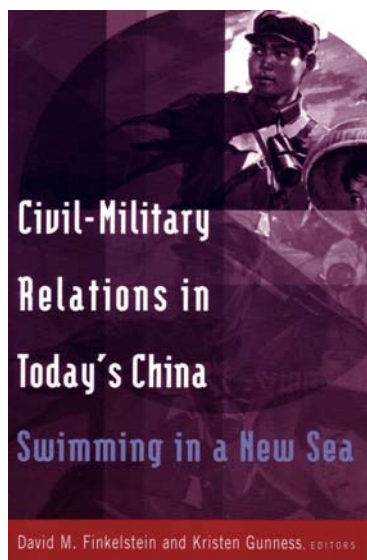
In the end though, these are minor issues and would only provide context to the whole Reserve experience and not the story of one Reservist, which Williams convincingly relays. Williams is generally positive of his Marine Reserve experience and at the end he notes he will always be a Marine. To Canadians, this account may open some eyes to the experience of Reservists and provide a greater understanding of their trials and tribulations; and, hopefully inspire Canadian Reservists to put their own experience down on paper. In the end, if it helps bridge the gap between the "Spare Parts" and the regular soldier, then this effort is well worth the read.

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## **CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN TODAY'S CHINA: SWIMMING IN A NEW SEA**

Edited by FINKELSTEIN, David M. and GUNNESS, K. Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2006, pages. \$29.95 USD PB, ISBN 978-0-7656-1660-9

**Reviewed by Richard Desjardins**



Much has been made in recent years of the growth of China's defence budget. For the past decade, these expenditures have increased by at least 10 percent annually and in some years, by as much as 20 percent. What has been done with these increases and where they fit into the larger picture of China's rise has been less clear. In this context, the publication of this book is timely. As the debate over Chinese military spending heats up, the need for informed analysis will grow. The value of this collective effort is enhanced by the fact that most authors are well known experts in the field of Chinese studies.

Western media coverage of the Chinese military has generally portrayed it as a monolithic organization blended with a similarly monolithic government. This view has contributed to the creation in the popular imagination of a fearsome power with one mind. Academic research, however, has been much more discerning of the reality. The Chinese state, for instance, has not been seen in this simplistic way for

some time. Recent research on the Chinese military has also made some headway in developing a more sophisticated picture. This is partly due to an effort by the Chinese government to gain greater acceptability in the international community. Its growing commercial success abroad is increasingly perceived as a threat by various constituencies in Western countries and the growth of its military expenditures further feeds into this fear. By providing a window on its military, the country hopes to assuage



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these concerns. This effort includes the publication of white papers on defence, greater foreign access to military publications in China, and meetings between Western scholars and Chinese military. The result has been a flood of academic research on various aspects of the Chinese military that is truly enlightening.

*Civil-Military Relations in Today's China* is the result of a conference sponsored by The CNA Corporation in May 2004. The avowed purpose of the gathering was to examine the impact of China's economic success on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and identify the challenges it faces to support China's growing clout on the international scene. The picture that emerges is mixed in that the PLA is indeed facing major challenges, but it will become a formidable force should it succeed.

Professor Tony Saich of Harvard University and Xiaobing Li, a former PLA officer and currently a professor at the University of Central Oklahoma individually outline the challenges that the surrounding society presents to the PLA. Professor Saich identifies two major factors that have shaped the reform agenda of the PLA: modernization and professionalization. On the one hand, modernization of the larger society has attracted many human resources away from the state and the military toward the more promising economic sector with its higher wages and other benefits. This development in turn has created recruiting problems for the PLA. Greater urbanization has made it difficult as well to recruit soldiers for rural areas. The aging population is also creating challenges in the area of budget allocation. Failure to address the needs of this group (retirement benefits and health care) could lead to civil unrest. Professionalization, the top priority for the PLA, will also challenge Chinese leaders to attract a pool of better qualified soldiers to man increasingly sophisticated equipment.

Professor Li addresses similar concerns but from a different angle. According to him, the growth of a modern liberal economy in China has had important effects on individual mindsets. Chinese recruits tend to be more individualists, less inclined to follow orders blindly, and are more career minded than patriotic, among other developments. These issues will challenge Chinese leaders to develop a loyal military.

Professor Cheng Li looks at the top military officers and finds that they are more professional than earlier generations, better educated, and substantially younger. On the other hand, they lack war experience, and nepotism and favoritism are still prevalent. Again these developments will present the Chinese leadership with major challenges.

Yu Bin, a political scientist, focuses on the relations between political and military leaders. He finds that the situation has stabilized considerably since the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Ironically, while the current political leaders have virtually no military experience, they have been particularly active in pushing for greater professionalization of the military—understood in part as less involvement in politics. This development is contributing to greater consultation between both sides.

If the discussion has generally been about the top of the structure, Professor Bo Zhiyue turned his attention to the impact of military reforms at the local level. His study reveals that much work has been put into the coordination of the political and military levers at this level. This work includes addressing the difficult demobilization of thousands of soldiers—1.7 million between 1985 and 2010. There is also the issue of the dual functions of regional airports, harbours and other real estate. If progress has been noted, the major challenge remains the institutionalization of the civil-military structure that has been put into place to improve coordination between civilian and military authorities.

As indicated above, professionalization of the Chinese military has been one of the top priorities of the government. During the Maoist period (1949-1976), being "red" (politically aware) was more important than being "expert" (professional). High technology played little role in Chinese military thinking. Chairman Mao relied on the

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superiority of numbers to overcome any invader. In that regard, a story reported in the press in the early post Mao period quoted Chairman Mao as saying that if the United States were to kill 500 million Chinese, China would have another 500 million to put forward.

The death of Mao in 1976 and Deng Xiaoping's consolidation of power in 1978 brought major changes to the PLA's mission, doctrines and training—a transformation that is likely to go on for at least another decade. If being “red” is not completely out, being “expert” is definitely on the ascendant. Professionalization has included the restoration of ranks, regulations for promotions with technical skills as the criterion, mandatory retirement, elaboration of functionally specialized military career paths, elaboration of a military education system, and promulgation of a National Defence Law to codify military responsibilities and processes. All these developments are described by Professor Lyman Miller of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

The political commissar, an institution unique to communist societies, is the object of You Ji's attention, a political scientist. Under the rule of President Jiang Zemin (1989-2003), the function of the political commissar has evolved considerably. It was originally intended to enforce control of the party over the gun. Under Jiang, it has evolved in different directions. Party secretaries are now concurrently political commissars. Their role is to enhance PLA interests in local affairs, promote popular awareness of national defence in society, and to address a concern that increasingly, political leaders have little or no experience in military affairs. Otherwise, commissars interfere minimally in military affairs—a development in line with the professionalization and depoliticization of the military.

Thomas Bickford, a senior analyst at the CNA Corporation, focuses on the reform of the military education system for officers. The shift from ideological indoctrination to technical expertise has required major changes in the educational infrastructure of the PLA. Military academies, curricula, teaching methods, new requirements for instructors, have all had to be reviewed to put officers through a formation that responds to the new reality. In an unprecedented move, the PLA is now looking at collaboration with civilian universities in various areas, including engineering. Numbers and size are out; quality and efficiency are in. The opening of the PLA to new approaches includes sending officers abroad and offering scholarships to talented students.

Further exploring the cooperation between the civilian and military education systems, Kristen A. Gunness looks at the various initiatives the PLA has drafted and implemented to produce highly qualified officers. These initiatives include recruitment incentives for gifted students, distinct educational programs for the military at civilian universities, the hiring of technical experts as faculty, and research partnerships between military academies and civilian universities. As a result of these initiatives, Gunness, also a senior analyst at the CNA Corporation, reports that as of May 2004 there were 15,000 national defence students enrolled in engineering and information technology (IT) programs.

Defence expenditures have occupied much of the Western media's attention in the last few years and for good reason. While the military share of the national budget remained fairly low between Mao's death in 1976 and 1988, the rise in defence expenditures in the 1990s averaged 15.9%. Much of these additional funds went to improving salaries for the military. Professor Joseph Fewsmith's concern, however, is with the likely future constraints on defence spending. He estimates that the military, like any other constituency, will have to fight to obtain its share of the national budget. Fewsmith, a political scientist at Boston University, calculates that this spending is likely to decrease over time as a share of national expenditures. He attributes this future trend to another major concern of the government: building a welfare state, including

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employment insurance, health care, and retirement programs. The Chinese government's legitimacy is largely based on its ability to generate economic growth and meet popular demands for material benefits. Thus, social domestic stability is likely to compete with national security for the central government's attention in the years ahead.

James Mulvenon, Director of Defense Group Inc. and a former political scientist at the Rand Corporation, notes that historically the Chinese military have relied on their own resources to generate revenues. The imperial system placed the burden of military financing on the soldiers. Soldiers were often seasonal workers on army lands between wars. This system was continued under communism as the central government had very little resources to allocate to its military. By the 1980s, the PLA had over 20,000 enterprises employing several million workers in various sectors. Military planes and trucks were put to use for the benefit of generating revenues. By the mid 1990s, the government came to realize that the PLA was devoting more resources to generating revenues than preparing to defend the country. Corruption also quickly set in. In July 1998, in a decision that had apparently secured the approval of the top military brass, President Jiang Zemin ordered the PLA to dissolve its business empire—a process that is still in progress. In exchange for its cooperation, the military was promised increases in defence budgets to meet its needs.

If economic prosperity has pushed millions of Chinese citizens above the poverty line, it has also created problems. One of these, competition for human resources between the private economy and the military, is fast becoming a nightmare for the latter. The PLA had to turn imaginative to attract talented men and women to its ranks. Conscription in China was becoming more and more resisted by a populace that was lured by the higher wages offered by the private sector. Sijin Cheng, a China analyst at the Eurasia Group, narrates this story by describing the military conscription system in China and the challenges it has been facing in the context of a booming economy with no end apparently in sight.

Between 1985 when China began cuts in its military personnel and the end of the latest targets set for 2010, the PLA will have seen its ranks reduced by 1.7 million soldiers. Demobilizing so many military in an economy that in the best years has to create millions of jobs for its university graduates is a recipe for disaster—unless it is a managed demobilization. The sensitivity of the issue is not lessened by the fact that peasant uprisings in China have often been led by demobilized soldiers. Maryanne Klivehan-Wise, a deputy director at the CNA Corporation, takes up this story by examining how the government, both at the central and local levels, managed this process. We find out that demobilization is only the first step in a larger process that includes finding new jobs for these ex-soldiers in other government departments or the private sector, or retirement.

Finally, militia and the reserves is the subject of Dennis Blasko's paper. Blasko, a retired US military intelligence officer, has written extensively on the Chinese military. His focus has generally been on the ground forces. In the current paper, Blasko highlights the importance the militia and reserves are taking in supporting regular forces in their march towards fighting war under modern conditions. He finds that the reforms taking place in the military is also being implemented in the militia and reserves. Blasko's work sheds light in an area that has been poorly covered.

All the contributors have used Chinese sources to the benefit of the readers. Solidly argued, their papers put more meat on a subject area that is just maturing. In the opinion of this reviewer, readers would benefit from reading a political history of modern China prior to delving into this book. Some of the authors, all experts in the China field, tend to assume prior knowledge of Chinese history. For anyone who aspires to become an expert in the field of Chinese military studies, this book is a must read.

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## A HISTORY OF THE FRENCH WAR—ENDING IN THE CONQUEST OF CANADA

JOHNSON, Rossiter. Pub: Heritage Books Inc.2007. (A facsimile reprint of the 1882 Edn)  
381 pages. ISBN: 978-0-7884-1464. \$ 31.50 US

Reviewed by Lt Col K W Kiddie, MA (CANTAB)



*A History of the French War—Ending in the Conquest of Canada* is a fascinating book in that it is a modern reprint of an 1882 original publication, and as such does not conform to the current accepted layout of modern history publications. The chapters are preceded by a small synopsis of what is contained in each chapter, thereby aiding the reader as to what is placed where in the volume. Time lines are indicated by a superscript on each page giving the year of occurrence, which is a very helpful tool. What is a major contrast with today's modern histories is that there are virtually no footnotes, no section of notes/ footnote explanation at the end of the volume and there is no bibliography. There is a small but comprehensive index and there are very few (just three) pictures. There is also no map included in the volume, which, given the large numbers of places described in the book, can cause some geographic confusion. However the book was written at a time when this was very much the style and would not have caused comment at the time. Another major difference from today's

publications is the absence of political correctness in the style of writing. For example the First Nation peoples throughout are called "Indians" and on occasions referred to as "the red man". Other sections of society are referred to as peasants, settlers (etc) all of which jars slightly to our modern views, but were perfectly acceptable at the time of the original publication. These minor aspects apart, this is an excellent insight into historical scholarship of the late 19th century.

As to the content of the book itself, it is far more comprehensive than the title would indicate. When I first saw the title I assumed (erroneously) that the French War referred to was the "French and Indian War" or the "Seven Years War" and that it would be a discourse on the campaign in Canada culminating with Wolfe's victory on the Plains of Abraham. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the book covered the Anglo French rivalry and conflict from the earliest times charting the struggle from the initial colonists' claims in around 1500. In the event, about half of the book is dedicated to the earlier struggles, listed variously as King William's War, Queen Anne's War and King George's War (this one known in Europe as the War of the Austrian Succession). There are other chapters which deal with subjects such as the French expansion in to the West and the fate of the Acadians.

It was this half of the book that I found really very interesting and informative, covering sectors of history which have been somewhat sidelined by the recent greater interest in the later French and Indian War. There is a wealth of detail contained and

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many surprising insights into the methods and mores of the competing empires. The involvement of the First Nations peoples are examined in detail and it is fascinating to learn of the extensive role played by Jesuit priests in establishing trading stations and settlements. In addition to the usual players such as Cabot, Champlain, Frontenac, there are a great many lesser-known characters' exploits described, such as Poutrincourt and indeed Madame de Guercherville to name but two. The history describes quite vividly the savage nature of the conflict in North America and how settlers on both sides were frequently treated in the most terrible manner in the run up to and in conflict itself. A good example is the description of the Schenectady massacre in 1690, which is illustrated by one of the few pictures in the book. The "tit for tat" nature of the aggression is clearly told, as settlements frequently changed hands or were routinely destroyed by either side. This occurred sometimes as the result of deliberate government policy, or on other occasions, the result of ambitious individuals' actions. This first half of the book effectively sets the scene for the study later of the conflict, which we know as the French and Indian war.

The remaining eleven chapters begin by describing the events in the Ohio valley, which eventually lead to the start of hostilities between the French and the British (as was said at the time "did set the world ablaze"), that culminated in the final defeat of French interests in mainland North America. Again there is a wealth of detail and a vast range of characters. George Washington features in the initial phases, as does Braddock and Bradstreet. However, what does come across is the fundamental difference in approach to the conflict between the British and the French. Despite the early reverses in the campaign, Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela River, Montcalm's victories at Fort William Henry and Ticonderoga, it was clear that the British, and indeed American Colonists, were prepared to compete in a long conflict. The British administration under Pitt was determined to win the war outside Europe and such a single-minded approach ensured that sufficient resources were allocated to the cause to ensure its ultimate success. The same could not be said of the French approach, which, despite early success by Montcalm, failed to sufficiently support that theatre of operations. All of which was set against the backdrop of the superiority of the British Royal Navy at the time when control of the sea in general and the North Atlantic in particular was crucial. This all leads up to the end point of the siege of Quebec and the battle on the Plains of Abraham which effectively spelt the end of French ambitions in North America, and cost the lives of both Wolfe and Montcalm.

In conclusion, *A History of the French War—Ending in the Conquest of Canada* is a very interesting and informative book, which contains a wealth of historical detail and covers the entire period of the rivalry between the two empires. I found the first half of the book particularly informative, dealing as it did with areas little discussed today, and enjoyed the many anecdotes which helped flesh out the bare historical facts. As I said at the start the layout and style of the writing is not exactly what we would expect today, but that should not detract from the value of the information contained therein. For any serious student of the Anglo-French rivalry in North America in general and the French and Indian war in particular, this would be a welcome addition to any bookcase.

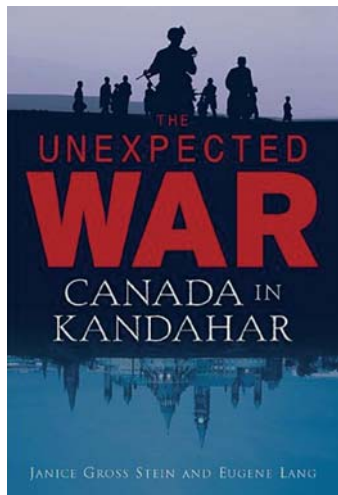


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## THE UNEXPECTED WAR: CANADA IN KANDAHAR

STEIN, Janice Gross. and LANG, Eugene. Toronto, Penguin Group, 2007. 304 pages  
\$35.00 CAD HC, ISBN 10: 0-670-06722-9

**Reviewed by Captain Jonathan Hubble**



The deployment of Canadian Forces to Kandahar has become a cause célèbre for journalists, editorialists, coffee room conversationalists, armchair generals and the public. Rarely has this much attention been paid to a Canadian Forces overseas mission. Canadian politicians are usually content to squabble over the distribution of regional industrial benefits, crumbs from the table of the defence procurement system. For a Canadian public that knows very little of its own defence policy, this highly accessible book is an eye-opener. While books about Canada's campaign in Afghanistan have already begun to surface, they largely tell personal and tactical level stories. The story told in *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* also lends itself to a serious study of Canada's political culture and its implications for our defence policy.<sup>1</sup> From a historical perspective, the interview data is an important contribution to the field of Canadian defence

history. This book will hopefully be part of a larger renaissance of writing and thinking regarding Canadian defence policy and Canada's overseas engagements. This review will concentrate on analyzing this book's contribution to our understanding of Canada's recent foreign and defence policy.

### Two Authors, Two Books

The two authors write two scripts, interwoven to make one book. The first script is the story of a senior aide to Liberal defence ministers John McCallum and Bill Graham, providing a first-hand apologia for defence policy under his watch. The story is compelling because it is the account of an insider. It is a rare and timely glimpse into the decision making of senior government officials. It is mesmerizing in its detail and its drama. Well written, we get first-hand accounts of very crucial moments in policy formation. The account is a gold mine of data for researchers looking to understand the bureaucratic politics and historical processes involved in Canada's recent foreign policy ventures. The second script is an exposition of the strategic problem facing Canadian foreign policy, defence policy and our Afghanistan mission. This script is clearly the contribution of Janice Gross Stein, University of Toronto foreign affairs expert and well known commentator on foreign and defence affairs. Her contribution is in the analysis of the strategic situation facing Afghanistan and the possibilities for cooperation, counter-insurgency and reconstruction in a seemingly unforgiving land. Both scripts provide important contributions to a contemporary understanding of Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, nested in a larger chronology of defence and foreign policy issues facing contemporary Canadian governments. The broad range of topics covered, from Afghanistan, ballistic missile defence, NATO policy, counter-insurgency and Canadian bureaucratic politics, sacrifice in-depth analysis for a fast paced and compelling historical narrative as told by the principal actors themselves.

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## Methodological Problems with Recent History

There are methodological problems that mar the account itself. It is questionable whether the chief of staff of former Liberal defence ministers is in a position to make an objective assessment of events. Not surprisingly, the senior members interviewed, such as John McCallum and Bill Graham, are all portrayed with impeccable explanations of their motives. Nearly all of these explanations are transmitted unquestioned to the reader as historical fact. The unique nature of the interview data makes it difficult to question the accounts given without access to the other players involved and documentary evidence. This asymmetry of information allows the authors to lend great credence to single-source accounts, a method which is risky when reconstructing from human memories, accounts of events that are otherwise undocumented. An indication of some carelessness with the facts is the blatantly false claim that over forty-five soldiers died "in the first few months" of the mission in Kandahar.<sup>2</sup>

## The Emperor Has No Clothes

One of the most important contributions this book brings to the defence community is a critique of the defence establishment and the public service's ability to achieve results demanded by its government and its citizens. The fault lines between the departments are exposed. The dysfunctional bureaucracy in Ottawa has a debilitating effect when Canada's strategy is to leverage governance, development and security lines of operation in an integrated approach to both reconstruction and counter-insurgency operations. In such a world, the political leaders feel let down by their experts and exposed, naked, in a policy world seemingly beyond the reach of their leadership. Canada's Foreign Service is portrayed as so dysfunctional that the government had to have its new 2005 foreign policy paper written by an Oxford academic with no official public service role. Defence is heavily criticized for the quality of the advice it gave successive Liberal defence ministers: "The advice that Canada's political leaders received from officials in National Defence was persistently wrong and consistently immune to correction even when the evidence didn't fit. What explains this obsession with the United States?"<sup>3</sup> For the authors, the answer lies in the *seduction of privileged access* to the latest toys and information in the defence market. Furthermore, "The CF relies on the U.S. military not only for doctrine but also for technology, equipment, training, and most of all, for approval."<sup>4</sup> What the analysts ignore is that on a more fundamental level, Canada's security is guaranteed by the United States; their capabilities, and their paternal interest in keeping Canada safe. If Canadians cannot imagine a dangerous world where we are vulnerable, it is likely because we are unwittingly shaded under the umbrella of American military hegemony: Having been sheltered for so very long, we no longer recall the vagaries of living in a dangerous world.

This is not to say that we owe the Americans a great deal for their protection, as the former American Ambassador to Canada states, "It is overwhelmingly in our interests to work with you."<sup>5</sup> Canada's military leaders realize that Canadian national defence and sovereignty is intimately linked to our continental situation; NORAD, NATO and other military level links render our national defence establishments highly intertwined. These structural links are not the fault of the defence community, rather the result of long-standing political arrangements that have been maintained over sixty years of government policy.

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## The Existential Challenge

The authors close their book by evaluating Canada's remaining options in Afghanistan. Given the appointment in October 2007 of the Manley Committee to look at Canada's options for Afghanistan, this analysis is a timely contribution. After identifying and airbrushing several policy options, they pose a more fundamental, existential challenge to the notion of expeditionary nation building stabilization forces: "To put the question bluntly, has the time passed when a Western army can intervene with force outside its own society?"<sup>6</sup> In other words, despite our best intentions, is what we want to do even within the realm of political possibility? This question strikes at the heart of our fundamental political question: How can our army fight and win complex wars in tribal societies that don't live by our rules, rules that are so ingrained we don't even notice them any more? The authors do an excellent job of tracing the historical path that determined our engagement in Afghanistan, identifying important institutional flaws in the Canadian foreign and defence establishments, and yet they find themselves unable to answer the most important question they raise: Is it even possible to do what we seem to want to do?

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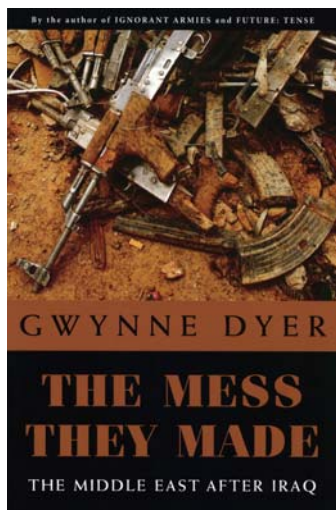
## Endnotes

1. Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar*, (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2007).
  2. 195.
  3. 264.
  4. *Ibid.*
  5. 263.
  6. 301.
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## THE MESS THEY MADE: THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER IRAQ

DYER, Gwynne, McClelland & Stewart; 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2007. 280 pages. \$21.99 CAN

Reviewed by Gregory Liedtke



There is little doubt that, while the military invasion was a resounding success, the American occupation of Iraq has been marred by an almost incomprehensible level of corruption, mismanagement, and overconfidence. The brutal civil war between the various religious and ethnic groups has dire implications for the integrity of Iraq and the stability of the Middle East as a whole. Despite the recent surge of troop strength, American political and military leaders appear utterly incapable of bringing peace and prosperity to Iraq. As author Gwynne Dyer argues in *The Mess They Made*, all this indicates that the Americans have clearly lost the war in Iraq and the real question is what will happen next?

Overall, the picture presented is one of optimism, even if only in the long run. Dyer contends that the best solution is for the Americans to withdraw completely, leaving events in both Iraq and the greater Middle East to unfold as they will. The oil, he assures his readers, will continue to flow regardless of what might transpire. Aside from this commodity, the "region is of little economic or

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strategic importance to the rest of the world." Dyer admits that even though this will probably result in a considerable amount of bloodshed and a fundamental transformation of the political landscape, ultimately the region will sort itself out for the better.

Superficially, the book may appear to be yet another diatribe against American foreign policies and the intelligence of the current American administration. Indeed, from the patronage of Israel to its stance on Iran's nuclear ambitions, Dyer is uncompromising in his critique of American foreign policy in the Middle East. There is also an unflinching attack against the neoconservatives, whose motives Dyer connects to efforts to maintain the superpower status of the United States via control of China's sources of oil imports.

Yet beyond this lies the true value of this study, namely Dyer's commendable effort to piece together the vast cultural, religious, political and historical mosaic of the region. All too frequently, geopolitical assessments have tended to focus almost exclusively upon one particular aspect or another, resulting in an incomplete picture. While some of his points are certainly debatable, Dyer's systematic breakdown of the internal social and political dynamics of Middle Eastern countries reveals a host of motivations and self-interests.

Contrary to the fears of some political analysts, these pose an almost insurmountable barrier to the emergence of any unified 'Shia crescent' or new Caliphate. Even if Islamist governments should emerge in the aftermath of any American withdrawal, Dyer notes they are unlikely to be as rabidly fanatical as is feared. Moreover, their ascension to power might turn out to be a good thing. With the Americans out of the region, a great deal of their ideological thunder would be rendered mute and they would be left with the much more difficult task of running a country. Should their efforts be less than successful, it is utterly conceivable that their populations, tiring of their religious zeal, would turn to more prosperous democratic forms of government. While many of the other possible outcomes Dyer details are bleak or utterly catastrophic, and include ethnic cleansing and the use of nuclear weapons, instead of unrealistic fears they are based upon solid assessments and a comprehensive understanding of the forces at work.

Admittedly, despite the breadth of Dyer's coverage, his account is a journalistic assessment rather than an academic study. The lack of a bibliography, footnotes, or an index undermines what would otherwise have been an extremely insightful and useful source to further the study of the issues it addresses. Moreover, little or no mention was made of the past, present, or future involvement of Russia, China, or Europe in the region. Even if the United States has played the greatest role, it would be naïve to assume that it has been the only force influencing and shaping events in the Middle East.

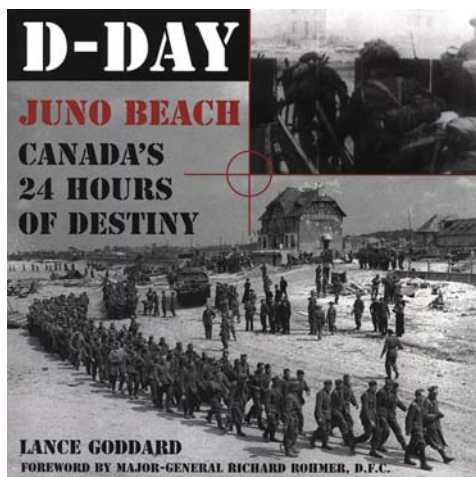
Even though such omissions detract somewhat from its comprehensiveness, they do not compromise the significance of this study. Easy to read and written in an informal tone, *The Mess They Made* is an important starting point for any informed speculation regarding the transformation of the Middle East in a post-Iraq world.

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## D-DAY: JUNO BEACH, CANADA'S 24 HOURS OF DESTINY

GODDARD, Lance. Dundurn Press, 2004, 254 pages. Soft cover \$29.99

Reviewed by Dr J. Craig Stone



*D-Day: Juno Beach, Canada's 24 hours of Destiny* is a well-written coffee table book released at an important time in Canadian military history. The book was part of a broader project to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Canadian participation in the Allied landings at Normandy on June 6, 1944.

The book is structured around each hour of June 6, 1944 and makes use of a combination of introductory comments by the author followed by individual veteran input into what each of them were doing at the hour in question. This approach provides the reader with both general knowledge about Canadian activity and the

more personal reflections from the veterans. This provides a much greater sense of realism about the event for the reader.

The book begins with two chapters that lay the foundation for the subsequent hourly narrative. First, Goddard provides the overall context of the importance of D-Day, why the date was chosen and what the broad plan for the invasion included. The balance of the first chapter covers the very general context of how Hitler rose to power, the early attempts at diplomacy and then a very brief description of what happened prior to the discussions leading to a decision on Normandy.

The second chapter provides more specific discussion on the activities leading up to D-Day with emphasis on why the Normandy beaches were chosen. The chapter also includes a discussion on the overall tactical plan and Canada's critical role in the invasion. Goddard makes the important point that Canada was one of only three national invading forces in the initial assault.

With the basic context provided in these first two stage setting chapters, the book then transitions into an hour-by-hour description of the events of D-Day. Chapters provide short discussions or analysis by Goddard on a particular issue and then personal context is provided by one or a number of the veterans who were involved in the event. Goddard then moves on and introduces the next issue for the chapter repeating the process of analysis and personal context from the veterans. This is the real strength and appeal of the book. Goddard has found the ideal balance between historical analysis and actual description by veterans who presented their stories in a meaningful and interesting style that captures the reader.

More importantly, the hourly discussion does not depend on a few individuals rather it provides a balance between different services and different elements within the service. The storytelling begins with the activities of the parachute battalions who were responsible for securing key gun emplacements that could threaten beach landings, to securing bridges to prevent panzer units from counterattacking and to hold the right flank. These early chapters include members of the parachute battalion and members



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of the Navy and Air Force, all describing what they themselves and their units actually did in support of the plan.

As might be expected, the focus of the discussion switches from pre-landing activities of the parachute battalions to the actual landing units and the Navy and Air Force units participating in or supporting the actual beach assault. The hourly chapters follow the Canadian activities throughout the day, providing a blend of historical analysis and veterans' input. The chapters are rich with photographs and maps leaving the reader with a very good sense of both the location and the environment in which the battle was being conducted.

Goddard concludes the book with a summary of results and the significance of the event. He then provides a brief biographical sketch of the veterans who provided the valuable input to the book, including a current day picture where available. Finally, Goddard ends the book with a section discussing Canada's Juno Beach Centre and a Glossary with pictures of some of the major equipment used by the Canadians during the Normandy landings.

*D-Day: Juno Beach, Canada's 24 Hours of Destiny* provides an excellent tribute to our veterans and their contribution to defend freedom and democracy. The reader should not expect there will be an in-depth analysis of Canadian participation at D-Day. This was not the intended purpose of the book; nor was it ever intended to be by the author. If there is a fault with the book it is that the reader really does need to have a good understanding of the Normandy campaign and the Canadian contribution in order to appreciate the value of the comments made by veterans throughout the book. Nevertheless this book is a very worthwhile and useful addition to anyone's library or book collection.

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## LOOS 1915: THE UNWANTED BATTLE

CORRIGAN, Gordon. Gloucestershire: Spellmount, 2006, 174 pages. Hard Cover

**Reviewed by Major Andrew B. Godefroy CD, PhD**

# Loos 1915 THE Unwanted Battle



GORDON CORRIGAN

Despite 90 years and much opportunity to explore the breadth of the conflict, much of the operational writing on the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) has remained focused on the battlefields of the Somme and Passchendaele. Few historians venture to examine the year 1915, when the BEF in France remained very much a junior partner to the French Army and subservient to its campaign strategy. Its engagements were considered sideshows in the eyes of the French high command, and this lack of recognition towards the BEF during its second year at war has in many ways persisted to the present day.

In, *Loos 1915: The Unwanted Battle*, ex-soldier and historian Gordon Corrigan takes you through one of the BEF's toughest engagements on the western front. He has done a commendable job of presenting a very readable history of this battle without sacrificing attention to historical accuracy and detail.

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His dispassionate analysis of the battle is grounded by his intimate knowledge of land warfare. An ex-officer of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, his writing reflects his experience with interpretation of ground, how command and control may affect a battle, as well as how tactical innovation may determine the outcome of an engagement.

In the summer of 1915, General Joffre and the French high command requested that the BEF engage the German armies on the left flank of the French Tenth Army (General d'Urbal) when it launched its own offensive against Artois. Not seen as a major player given that the French were attacking at Artois and Champagne with three full armies, nevertheless the smaller British force was asked to apply pressure against the Germans around the grouping of industrial towns centered on Loos. A detailed reconnaissance of the ground by the BEF generals determined that it was the worst possible place from which to launch an attack against heavily defended German positions. Their answer back to the French was simply, no.

Strange how the politics of coalitions will often supercede common military sense, and despite it being an unwanted battle fought on unfavourable ground, the British conceded to French pressure and launched an assault towards Loos on September 25th and embarked on a battle that would effectively spell the end of what little remained of Britain's contemptible little army.

Though officially the battle ended on October 8th, Corrigan completes an analysis of the entire period of fighting through to November 4th, when the Commander of the BEF's First Army (Haig) informed his commander in chief, Sir John French that he could do no more. For a sideshow, Corrigan points out that the Battle of Loos cost the BEF 16,000 casualties, and he has done a remarkable job of detailing the casualties suffered as the battle progresses. As one reads the book, you can almost sense the draining away of the BEF's strength. From a student's perspective, this battle provides an excellent case study of the necessity for fire support and reserves, and how critical timing becomes when committing these assets to battle.

Corrigan also makes note of several interesting aspects to the battle. He highlights the level of leadership displayed. Several of the divisional and brigade commanders are killed or wounded in action. He spends time exploring the fate of a famous son, that of Rudyard Kipling the immortal bard of the British Army. Also worthy of note are the sections that explain the dynamic culture of the BEF and how it was composed—who filled the rank and file of the Guards, how the Territorial Force was mobilized, and new army divisions fared as they did.

Above all else, one easily recognizes Corrigan's comfort with his subject and his application of a soldier's eye towards the events of the battle. At all times he is careful to remain dispassionate and objective, and examines the predicaments of the British attack in context. This approach leads to a solid and well researched book.

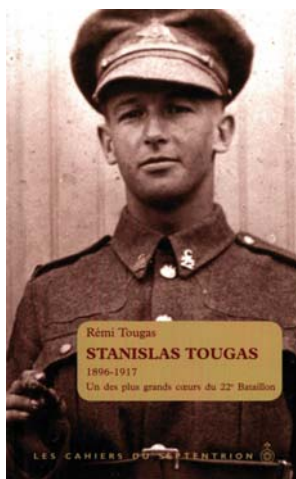
The year 1915 is one of many lessons for the BEF, and Corrigan's addition to the subject will certainly help examine these issues further. Well written and very readable, *Loos 1915: The Unwanted Battle*, is a recommended read for those interested in the First World War.

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## STANISLAS TOUGAS (1896-1917)—UN DES PLUS GRANDS COEURS DU 22E BATTALION

TOUGAS, Remi (Cahiers du Septentrion, 2005) paper, 221 pages, ISBN 2-89448-413-5.

**Reviewed by Lieutenant-Colonel R.S. Williams, MSM CD**



This excellent French language volume traces the path of Stanislas Tougas and the other members of the extended Tougas family through their service in the First World War. The author's style and use of official documentation, letters and media of the period provides an outstanding example for any family genealogists looking to chronicle the experiences of family members who served in the Great War.

Very well described is the little known initial reaction to a French-speaking battalion in the rural Nova Scotia town of Amherst; favourable and equally surprising to the members of the battalion and to the inhabitants of this small maritime town. After an initial period of getting acquainted, and as initial wariness and preconceived ideas were forgotten or disproved, a friendship was formed that the Amherst Daily News commented very favourably upon in May 1915 on the battalion's departure for overseas service.

The early chapters detail how young Stanislas Tougas, working in Montreal when the First World War broke out, went about joining the army and his initial impressions of military life. This part of the book includes the timeless anecdotes that typify the training experiences of young men preparing to go off to war. His letters deal with homesickness, and dealings with both officers and senior non-commissioned officers who were not always understanding towards the young recruit. As the short biography of Soldat Stanislas Tougas, one of the original "Van Doos", unfolds, extracts from his letters and war diaries reveal profound war weariness, as the number of fellow "originals" dwindles.

This book is especially timely given the recent 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, coupled with the fact that no Canadian combat veterans of the First World War remain alive. The fact that Stanislas Tougas' life was cut short during what initially was termed "the great adventure, not to be missed" makes this short volume even more poignant.

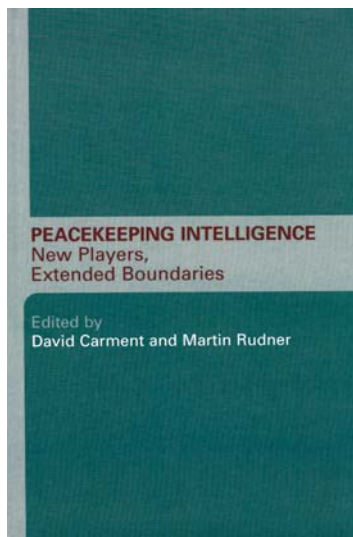
I highly recommend this book to all interested in the experiences of young men caught up in the time when the Great War to End All Wars was the show that many did not want to miss. This book is a must for any one interested in a short version of the history of Canada's Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. It can be read in one sitting and will provide many avenues for subsequent research.

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## PEACEKEEPING INTELLIGENCE: NEW PLAYERS, EXTENDED BOUNDARIES

CARMENT, David and RUDNER, Martin. Eds., New York, Routledge, 2006, 214 pages.  
\$134.50 CAN

Reviewed by Mr. Neil Chuka



A major difficulty of intervening in complex conflicts and crises is acquiring, analyzing, sharing and applying appropriate intelligence. Many, if not most, contemporary conflicts seem to involve at least one, and usually multiple, non-state actors. Traditional intelligence that identifies such things as political hierarchies and force capabilities and distribution normally used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of a state based adversary are insufficient for grasping the nuance of networks, relationships, motives and centres of gravity of non-state actors. While traditional intelligence products remain useful, they must be bolstered with additional material identifying the moral and physical strengths and weaknesses of both adversarial and friendly groups involved in a conflict. Equally important is developing the understanding of what types of information and intelligence is required, how these can be gained, fused and applied.

To address these varied challenges, David Carment and Martin Rudner, both professors at Carleton University's Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, have produced an edited collection of essays based on presentations at the conference *Peacekeeping Intelligence: New Players, Extended Boundaries* that took place at Carleton University in early December 2003.

The book draws out and briefly illustrates the major intelligence issues arising in peacekeeping or peace support operations. These issues include the limitations of conventional military intelligence processes and systems, the use of open-source information, the development of human intelligence networks, the often problematic relationship between non-governmental organizations and the military and the maintenance of humanitarian space, and the expanded role and requirement for new doctrine and training for some military capabilities. Indeed, the topics discussed in the various essays continue to be noted as problems in contemporary lessons learned documents, specifically with regard to intelligence sharing, verification of human and open source intelligence, the synchronization of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets, the integration of coalition staff, and the fusion and analysis of intelligence. Importantly, the book is grounded in history, with a number of essays detailing intelligence problems that characterized peace support missions from the mid 1990s to the turn of the century.

From these essays, three broad conclusions can be made: first, that much of the intelligence required to effectively intervene in a conflict is open-source and that the major issue is collating and distilling that information into a useful form; second, that the issues raised and discussed in this book are in fact applicable to almost the entire spectrum of military operations; and third, that there are no easy answers or set formulas to facilitate cooperation between national government departments, coalition partner governments, international organizations, or non-governmental organizations. Indeed,

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one of the justifications for the review of this book is that the volume raises questions and suggests some answers that are directly relevant to Canadian involvement in Afghanistan, Haiti, and the Sudan, three focal points of Canadian foreign policy.

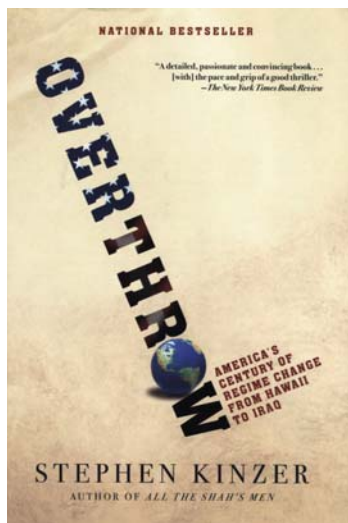
The book is not without its limitations. Those looking for the highly detailed reference sections of peer reviewed articles should look elsewhere. Although well referenced for conference presentations, these essays do not pretend to be more than a point of departure for understanding the subject. The book succeeds in providing a solid foundation for the reader to understand the broad range of intelligence problems facing political and military leaders attempting to create long term solutions to often systemic conflicts. In the end, this volume is recommended to anyone that wants or needs to develop a firm understanding of the complexity of intelligence collection, analysis and application problems inherent to most Canadian and allied interventions today.

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## OVERTHROW: AMERICA'S CENTURY OF REGIME CHANGE FROM HAWAII TO IRAQ

KINZER, Stephen. New York, Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2007, 416 pages. \$15.00

Reviewed by Dr. Barbara J. Falk



Immediately after 9/11, it was impolitic if not immoral to suggest that the history of United States' (US) foreign policy had been even marginally responsible for either the terrorist attacks themselves, or for murderous regimes of despots such as Iraq's Saddam Hussein. A few lone liberals, such as Lewis Lapham and Susan Sontag argued for a more nuanced view, but were pilloried for their positions. More than half a decade later however, the Anglo-American public is more circumspect—if not jaded—and thus receptive to voices arguing for a corrective of the long-standing historical amnesia of the United States.

Among these voices is Stephen Kinzer, a veteran foreign correspondent for the *Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. In *Overthrow*, he seeks to examine the much maligned concept of regime change in the *longue durée* of US history. He convincingly demonstrates that armed intervention does not begin with George W. Bush

in Iraq but indeed is as American as apple pie. Woven through the Monroe Doctrine and manifest destiny is the explicit desire to control or influence the political and economic behaviour of the Western hemisphere in order to meet American national and commercial interests. As a journalist, Kinzer knows the value of a compelling narrative in attracting and holding an attentive reader, and his prose is both energetic and entertaining. With biographical detail, he brings alive the many swashbuckling protagonists of his story. From "banana man" and East European emigré Sam Zemurray's private efforts to overthrow the government of Honduras along with fellow soldier-of-fortune mobster "Machine Gun" Molony through to Smedley Bultler who, at the age of 28 was already a veteran of three US regime change operations, one cannot help but both abhor and admire the audacious military planning and subterfuge of the many characters discussed.



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Thankfully, although hard-hitting in its conclusions, many of which are not without challenge and controversy, Kinzer's book is not an ideological diatribe. He does not automatically equate US experience with Old World imperialism, nor does he assume that intervention automatically yielded worse societies or governments than would have otherwise been the case absent gunboat or dollar diplomacy (and he engages in a few scenarios of fascinating historic alternatives). At a time when history as a discipline is too often narrowed to the micro level in focus and detail or couched in esoteric language only accessible to academics, it has too often become the task of journalists to take on the sweep of history, and to spin a good yarn in the process, and Kinzer fits well into this mould.

*Overthrow* is in reality three books in one. The first section, subtitled "The Imperial Era," begins with the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani's rule in Hawaii and its eventual annexation as a US state through to US efforts in the Philippines, Central America and the Caribbean. These adventures, Kinzer argues, were inspired by naval theorist Alfred Thayer Mahan, who argued that states become great via the access to trade and markets that sea power guaranteed, and Mahan's approach was championed by the powerful Washington elite. The second section, "Covert Action," details the post World War II efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency in operationalizing four coups that had lasting consequences for each of the states involved: the 1953 removal of Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran; Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán's flight from power in Guatemala in 1954; the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973; and initial efforts at regime change in Vietnam in 1963 prior to large-scale US troop commitments. Clouded in judgement by the extreme anti-Communism of John Foster Dulles and his contemporaries, Kinzer bemoans the point that no one questioned the overriding premise on which all such operations were based, that the states in question were indeed in imminent danger of falling into Soviet hands. In retrospect, we know that the domino theory worked largely in reverse: in toppling authoritarian communism in 1989 in Eastern Europe rather than in ensuring the global success of the red menace. The third section, "Invasions," discusses post Cold War interventions in Grenada and Panama, as well as post 9/11 operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In this last section, Kinzer is at his most damning, particularly as he recounts intelligence failures and American unilateralism leading up to the war in Iraq. Although he is more balanced in his assessment of Afghanistan, acknowledging the moral obligation of the US to help rebuild the state given its previous support for the mujahedin throughout the 1980s and the urgent necessity in keeping the area free from becoming either a terrorist safe haven or a leading producer of heroin, he remains critical of the means employed, particularly with respect to the turning of public and political attention from Afghanistan to Iraq.

Much of Kinzer's book is a detailed catalogue of the old adage-you reap what you sow. Had democratic opposition movements in Latin America, for example, not been rejected as challenging US interests but as largely reflections of local and nationalist concerns that they were, the more radical alternatives such as Fidel Castro in Cuba or the Sandanistas under Daniel Ortega would not have been successful or generated as much charisma and cachet in the process. Given situations where real or imagined violence was the only alternative seen by the US in its regime change operations, even greater violence was unfortunately seen as the only available means of challenging US power. In the end, Kinzer concludes that successful regime change has largely yielded catastrophic results, which in the long run have weakened rather than strengthened American security as a whole (p. 317). Democracy, although often wielded as a rhetorical instrument, was little promoted in the past and indeed more often than not democratically elected governments were overthrown and replaced with tyrants. Moreover, now that the Bush government has appeared to take democracy promotion seriously, it has done so in an uneven and contradictory manner.

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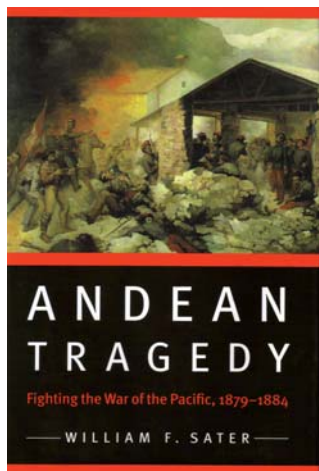
Finally, congressional leaders today should take heed. The Bush-led concentration of power in the executive branch is far from unique, as US presidents have historically played a major role as either instigators or defenders of regime change operations (from William McKinley in the Philippines through to Ronald Reagan in Grenada). Indeed, regime change sponsorship has been seized by presidents as part of their job description since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a sobering thought as the US enters primary and election season this year.

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## **ANDEAN TRAGEDY: FIGHTING THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC 1879–1884**

SATER, William F. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. 453 pgs.

**Reviewed by Major Les Mader**



Being the product of a Euro-centric education—with an emphasis on the European experience in North Americas—I am often startled to learn of major historical events that occurred in other parts of the world. Some have been of great significance in their times, and even in our own; yet their existence figures nowhere in the books and films commonly available in Canada. Even if some information is available it tends to be in the language of the country or ethnic group affected. Only when an effort is made to tell the story in English or French does the story break into the Canadian mainstream.

One such event is the War of the Pacific that saw Chile defeat Peru and Bolivia in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This war changed the history and boundaries of all three countries and has bedevilled their relations ever since. It may have cost them a total of some 55,000 dead

and wounded.<sup>1</sup> The war saw the use of machine guns, breech-loading rifles and cannons, ironclad warships, mines (land and sea) and naval torpedoes. If studied, its experiences might have informed the European and American armies on the evolving nature of combat in the lead-up to World War I.

William F. Sater has written what may become the classic one-volume, English language history of this war. He is an academic and professor of history at the University of Nebraska. His writing credits include two other books on the Chilean Army and the history of Chile. The book's bibliography fills 13 pages, including extensive belligerent sources; another 60 pages are devoted to the endnotes.

The story is distributed through a lengthy introduction and 10 chapters. The first three set the scene for the war by describing its causes and comparing the opposing armies and navies. These chapters make clear how different the fighting forces involved were from their European contemporaries, and what we would consider essential today. By way of examples, none of the armies started the war with either a logistics corps or a medical service and the Peruvian government so feared that its navy would mutiny or support a rebellion that it hid parts of the ships' engines to make them useless.

Chapters Four and Five cover the naval war that had to be won before Chile dared to conduct serious land operations in the main theatre. The severity of the disputed Atacama Desert region and the near non-existence of land based infrastructure and communication networks meant that armies had to be moved and supported by sea.

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Chapter Four ends with the death of the Chilean hero, Arturo Prat, and the destruction of some 40% of the Allies' offensive naval power. Chapter Five details the Peruvian efforts, under the leadership of their naval hero, Miguel Grau, to hold off the superior Chilean navy under the command of its ambitious, lethargic and disobedient Admiral Williams Rebolledo. In the end though, luck, superior Chilean strength and a new enemy commander led to Grau's defeat and death.

With the Peruvian navy essentially finished, the way was open for the Chileans to invade and occupy the coveted Peruvian and Bolivian coastal provinces. This struggle fills the next two chapters. It sees the Chileans conducting an opposed amphibious landing, manoeuvring in extremely inhospitable terrain and ultimately defeating the allied armies at the Battle of Tacna—essentially knocking Bolivia out of the war.

With the desired provinces seized, Chile hoped for peace. However, Peru was not prepared to give up. Thus, the Chileans decided to invade central Peru and capture Lima, the capital. By January 22, 1881 they had destroyed the hastily rebuilt Peruvian army at the Battles of Chorrillos and Miraflores and entered the capital city.

Chapter Nine describes the bitter and murderous guerrilla war that the Peruvians waged against the Chilean occupiers for another three years. Writing in 2006 and 2007, the author provides a parallel, perhaps unconscious, with the United States' current experience in Iraq, making the point that "...*Chile encountered more difficulties pacifying the Peruvian interior than it did vanquishing the Allies during the War of the Pacific's first two years.*"<sup>2</sup> This chapter contains the all too common litany of guerrilla wars—over-run outposts, hard marching, privation, atrocities and the misery suffered by the civilian population.

The above quick description of a single chapter captures one of the great benefits of this book; it brings home the importance of the confluence of personalities, training, cohesion, unique circumstances and logistics to the unfolding of any struggle. At a time in history when some wish to give overwhelming prominence to the impact of new technology on the conduct of war, it is valuable to be reminded that specific technologies are simply tools that must be properly used in order to be relevant. By way of example, a simple compilation of numbers, defensive works and the types of equipment available to the Allies would prove that the Chileans could not have won the Battles of Tacna and Chorrillos. In both battles the Chileans attacked and defeated numerically similar, dug in opponents. The Chilean use of mass assault formations and frontal attacks against Allied defences employing breech-loading rifles, rifled cannons, machine guns (mainly Gatlings) and even some land mines should have been as bloodily defeated as most similar attacks during the American Civil War and World War 1. Instead, the Chileans won both battles decisively.

The final chapter of the book—the conclusion—is well written and brings the narrative together in a very clear and informative fashion. One is left with a good understanding of the lessons that could be drawn from the war.

While I found the book's subject very interesting and its writing style enjoyable, it has several problems that detracted from my appreciation of it. The first two relate to the maps supporting the narrative. The complete lack of an overall map, showing the major cities, political divisions and topographical features relevant to the campaigns, greatly weakens the readers' understanding of the author's discussion of the wisdom, folly and unfolding of certain plans and manoeuvres. Secondly, the maps that are provided frequently lack important information discussed in the text. Thus, one has to ignore the map or carefully read and reread the map and text to interpolate where the events described occurred. The third weakness flows perhaps from the author's academic, rather than military, background. He is inconsistent in providing the technical details

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about the forces involved that military readers will likely seek out so as to understand their strengths and weaknesses. For example, the tables of organization that complement some battle descriptions provide delightfully detailed lists of unit names but do not provide something as simple as total strengths of personnel and major equipments. Finally, the (to me) great similarity of Peruvian, Chilean and Bolivian names forced me at times to reread passages to try and understand which side had done what to whom. The simple expedient of putting one side's names in a different font, italic, bold or small caps, would have avoided this problem completely. In summary, the combination of missing or inadequate maps, a paucity of technical information and my difficulty keeping the players clear made the narrative harder to follow. This is unfortunate as the story is stirring and otherwise well told.

Overall, despite its shortcomings, I would recommend this book to any reader seeking to expand their understanding of the nature of war, wanting to understand an event that had a major impact on South American history or simply looking for a good read.

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## Endnotes

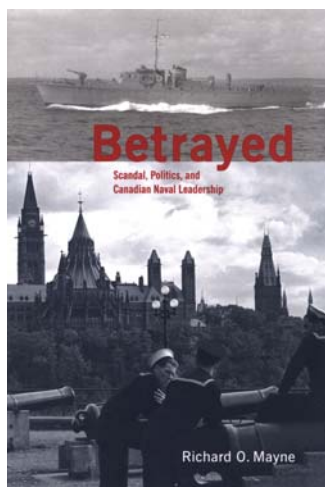
1. Casualty estimate as found in the Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia on 29 Jun 07.
2. Page, 309.

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## BETRAYED: SCANDAL, POLITICS, AND CANADIAN NAVAL LEADERSHIP

MAYNE, Richard O. Vancouver: UBC Press, July 2007, 279 pages. Paperback. \$29.95 CAN

### Reviewed by Mr. Neil Chuka



Admiral Percy W. Nelles, RCN, was Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) from 1934 until he was promoted out of the position in 1944. During his tenure, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) underwent an unprecedented expansion. From the economic hardship of the interwar years, a handful of warships and less than 2000 regular force officers and men, the RCN expanded fiftyfold during World War II (WWII). By 1945, the RCN was comprised of some 100000 regular, reserve and volunteer reserve officers and ratings, 400 warships, and 500 auxiliary vessels. The scope of expansion remains staggering. In addition, the expansion was challenged by a non-existent interwar naval policy, the almost complete lack of maritime infrastructure and little national naval/scientific expertise. On top of all this, the RCN became engaged in a battle that was

technologically driven, in some respects more so than any other aspect of WWII. Nelles had a staff of ten in August 1939 with which to tackle these formidable challenges.

Most Canadian naval historians sympathize with Nelles and note the difficulties he faced, but fault him as lacking the appropriate leadership acumen, vision and technical knowledge necessary to succeed. Although some assessments are harsher than others, Tony German's sums up the traditional treatment of Nelles's wartime leadership by

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noting he did not fill the requirement for “a brilliant, experienced, and dynamic leader,” and that, even had he possessed these attributes, the enormity of the task may still have been unachievable.<sup>1</sup> In the end, the primary justification for Nelles’s dismissal was his supposed inability to facilitate the modernization of Canadian warships apace with the rapid technological advances of the Atlantic war.

Richard Mayne, a historian with the Directorate of History and Heritage in Ottawa, challenges the traditional assessment of Nelles and the justifications for his dismissal in this volume. In it, he makes a cogent argument that Nelles was a political scapegoat, sacrificed in a bid by Liberal Minister of National Defence for Naval Services Angus Macdonald to stave off a potential scandal. Mayne’s complex argument has two main thrusts. The first is that a small group of influential volunteer reserve officers, including Andrew Maclean (nephew of the founder of the periodical), developed grievances based on the supposed bias of permanent force officers to their wartime reserve colleagues. To salve these grievances, and to address what they perceived as the poor leadership and conduct of the naval war by the government and naval headquarters, the network of reservists circumvented chains of command by leveraging pre-war personal and professional connections and threatened to create a political scandal based on the operational deficiencies of the RCN during the first half of the war.

The second thrust of Mayne’s argument is that very real fleet modernization issues were rooted in government neglect of naval policy, the navy, and national industrial strategy during the interwar period. Exacerbating the situation was Prime Minister Mackenzie King’s nationalistic policies that forced a distancing from the training resources of the Royal Navy. Combined, these political issues left Canada unprepared to fight a technologically driven war in the North Atlantic. Mayne’s argument is that Nelles was removed from the CNS post in a move orchestrated by Macdonald’s executive assistant, John Connolly, to deflect the true origins of the modernization problems and placate the network of wartime reservists and Maclean who had the wherewithal to turn naval issues into public political issues through the press.

Mayne’s assessment is certainly interesting and persuasive, providing new insight into the issue of the naval politics in WWII. One major issue though, is determining the actual influence of the reserve network and Maclean. For example, given that Maclean’s primary outlet seems to have been *Boating* magazine, one wonders if the readership of this periodical was large or influential enough in the 1940-43 period that it would have constituted a major threat to Macdonald or the King government. Furthermore, while acknowledging that Canada and Canadian society and political circles were smaller in the 1930s and 40s than they are today, it is difficult to assess the actual level of influence the reservist network may have had on the outcome of a political debate on the RCN’s operational deficiencies. If the strength of Maclean’s network was not what Mayne claims, then there must have been real issues with Nelles’s leadership that are not fully addressed in the book. Finally, the inclusion of some detail on the specifics of modernization would help readers unfamiliar with WWII RCN equipment to understand why the problem was so pressing. Explaining how, for example, lengthened forecastles exponentially increased the efficiency of corvettes, or even inclusion of an appendix illustrating the rapid advancements in capability of the various radar and asdic sets, would allow a novice reader to comprehend why the modernization issue was so operationally and politically critical.

This book is highly recommended. Mayne’s argument is sufficiently powerful to cause a reconsideration of traditional assessments of the politics and leadership of the RCN in WWII. Moreover, the book highlights the continuing folly of Canadian naval



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procurement. With little exception, Canada has never prepared and executed a national maritime industrial strategy that can sustain domestic shipbuilding. Equally disturbing is the lack of clear naval policy to provide long term guidance and funding that would allow continual modernization and recapitalization of Canada's fleet. Through all of this, the Navy has managed, arguably, to become the most interoperable of the services with our closest ally, no mean feat given the policy challenges and technological sophistication of naval platforms. Mayne's book provides much relevant food for thought as the Navy undergoes the acquisition of new support ships, Halifax-class midlife refits, planning for destroyer replacement, the creation of an Arctic deepwater berthing facility and takes possession of new maritime rotary wing aircraft.

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## Endnote

1. Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990, p.148.



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