



WE WILL FIND A WAY

THE CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS LEGACY

Colonel (Retired) Bernd Horn, PhD

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101 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K2

Produced for CANSOFCOM Education & Research Centre
by 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office.
WPO31710

FRONT COVER PHOTO: SOF Operator in Afghanistan. CANSOFCOM

BACK COVER ARTWORK: “Looking Back: The Canadian SOF Legacy” by Silvia Pecota

ISBN 978-0-660-27543-7 (PAPER)

ISBN 978-0-660-27542-0 (PDF)

Government of Canada Catalogue Number D2-405/2018E (PAPER)

Government of Canada Catalogue Number D2-405/2018E-PDF (PDF)

Printed in Canada.

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD. i

INTRODUCTION iii

CHAPTER 1 1
The Ranger Tradition

CHAPTER 2 9
Strength from Weakness: The World War II Experience

CHAPTER 3 37
Special Operations in the Cold War

CHAPTER 4 55
The Rise of Terrorism: The Post-Cold War Experience

CHAPTER 5 83
Canadian Special Operations Forces Command

ABOUT THE AUTHOR. 107

ENDNOTES 109

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS 125

INDEX 131

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I introduce *We Will Find a Way: The Canadian Special Operations Legacy*. This publication is intended to provide individuals with background knowledge on Canada's Special Operations and Special Operations Forces (SOF) legacy. Prior to 9/11, the global narrative of Special Operations Forces (SOF) had largely been relegated to the margins of the historical record. Yet, with the more visible employment of SOF in the War on Terror waged in Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the world, SOF have been increasingly removed from the shadows. This shift into the light has been exemplified in the Canadian experience. While, importantly, this nation has conducted "special operations" since its inception, many, if not most, Canadians remain unaware of this rich history. *We Will Find a Way: The Canadian Special Operations Legacy* addresses this deficit by providing a historical glimpse at Canada's special operations experience and, in so doing, helps to expose the foundation of contemporary special operations which are rooted in the achievements of the individuals and organizations that paved their way. As such, this latest Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM) Education & Research Centre (ERC) publication is another step toward capturing and promulgating the history of Canada's special operations experience.

As always, our intent at the ERC is to provide interesting educational material that will assist individuals in the Command, as well as those external to it, learn more about human behaviour, special operations, and military theory and practice. I hope you find this publication informative and of value to your operational role. In addition, it is intended to spark discussion, reflection and debate. Please do not hesitate to contact the ERC should you have comments or topics that you would like to see addressed as part of the CANSOFCOM publication series.

Dr. Emily Spencer
Director
CANSOFCOM ERC

INTRODUCTION

In August of 2014, the former Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), Admiral Bill McRaven, declared that we are currently in the “Golden Age of SOF.”¹ His statement is easily understood. Special Operation Forces (SOF) were well-recognized by the public and politicians, and for the most part highly respected as the country’s premier warriors. A myriad of books, video games, Hollywood blockbusters and TV shows were dedicated to uncovering these shadow warriors. Moreover, strategic analysts, scholars, as well as political decision-makers, spoke of SOF in terms of “Force of Choice” and “SOF Power.” Yet, SOF have not always existed in the limelight. In fact, for the greatest part of SOF’s evolution, they have been shunted to the periphery and marginalized as a military capability. Their increased recognition, arguably, only began in the late-1980s and early-1990s after the creation of USSOCOM and its performance in the Gulf War, as well as the subsequent period of turmoil in the aftermath of 9/11, the tragic terrorist attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City of 11 September 2001.

The Canadian experience mirrored that of the Americans and most other Western industrialized countries. Canada’s special operations and SOF legacy were little known prior to 9/11. In fact, in October 2001, the Canadian Minister of National Defence (MND) was repeatedly criticized by the media for the perceived failure of Canada to do enough to assist “our” American brethren in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the attack in New York. During one such scrum, the MND finally revealed that Canada was indeed helping. Moreover, he made mention that Canadian “commandos” were actually supporting the American effort in theatre.

This revelation came as a shock to most Canadians. Few actually knew that Canada possessed “commandos” or more accurately SOF. Additionally, the newly gained knowledge that such special troops were in action was enough to quiet the outcry. Nonetheless, the larger issue still remained, who were these shadow warriors? Their existence up until that point had been a well-guarded secret. Neither Canadians, nor anyone else for that matter, knew much about Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2), much less any other of the Canadian organizations that had existed and had

conducted special operations in the country's history. Little did most know that Canada had a remarkable and rich special operations legacy.

Significantly, Canada's special operations and SOF institutions can be traced back to the Ranger tradition of colonial North America where raiding, or "direct action," as well as special reconnaissance allowed the embryonic Canadian nation to punch above its weight and achieve strategic impact through tactical action. The national SOF legacy continued in the Second World War with a number of specialized units and into the Cold War period in the form of the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

The Canadian SOF (CANSOF) more modernized form was created in 1986, with the creation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Special Emergency Response Team (SERT), which was established as a hostage rescue unit. In 1993, the role was taken over by the military and was recreated as JTF 2. The military evolved the hostage rescue unit into a Tier One SOF organization. In 2005, the Chief of the Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, decided that as part of the continuing transformation of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) he would create what would virtually become a fourth service, a Canadian Special Operations Forces Command (CANSOFCOM).² "We intend," he declared on 19 April 2005, "on bringing JTF 2, along with all the enablers that it would need, to conduct operations successfully into one organization, one commander, one organization."³

As such, on 1 February 2006, his vision was realized with the stand-up of CANSOFCOM, an independent SOF Command, within the CAF. This volume provides a window into the Canadian special operations and SOF experience and legacy.



SOF operator in the Arctic.

CHAPTER 1

THE RANGER TRADITION

The Canadian public has become more attuned to SOF as a result of their coverage in Afghanistan post 9/11. In fact, the revelation of an elite Canadian counter-terrorist unit only became widespread knowledge as a result of a media disclosure that they were deploying to Afghanistan in support of the American effort. However, the nation's SOF legacy runs deep. After all, nothing embodies the idea of daring special operations more than the practice of *la petite guerre* by the French-Canadian raiders during the struggle for colonial North America.⁴ Facing a harsh climate, unforgiving terrain and intractable and savage enemies, the intrepid Canadian warriors personified boldness, courage, cunning and tenacity. Their fearless forays and daring raids behind enemy lines struck terror in the hearts of their Native antagonists, as well as the British and American colonists and soldiers. In fact, for an extended period of time, these tactical actions had a strategic effect on the bitter struggle for North America.

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Terrorizing the Frontier.”

Schooled in the vicious war of annihilation with the Iroquois in the 17th Century, the French-Canadians developed a class of fighters who were able to adapt to the new style of warfare required in the New World.⁵ Moreover, they demonstrated an intellectual and tactical agility that made them unsurpassed in “raiding” and what would later be dubbed commando operations. Their emphasis on stealth, speed, violence of action, physical fitness and courage, as well as operations with indigenous allies created a force that successfully wreaked havoc on their enemy.

This capability, much to the misery of the English, was consistently displayed as the two competing European powers increasingly fought for control of North America. Quite simply, the French consistently relied on the outnumbered Canadians to hold onto French territory through their proficient execution of their distinct Canadian way of war, specifically small parties of experienced *coureur de bois* and partisans who conducted dangerous scouts, ambushes and raids in English territory.⁶ As such, raids against the English in Hudson’s Bay in 1686, the Seneca in New York in 1687, the Iroquois in 1693 and 1696, and a number of devastating strikes against English settlements such as Casco, Deersfield, Haverhill, Salmon Falls and Schenectady during a succession of wars from 1688 to 1761 provided proof of the effectiveness of the French-Canadian raiders who specialized in the conduct of lightning strikes behind enemy lines.

Artwork by Silvia Pecota



“French-Canadian Raider and Native Allies.”

Many French and Canadian leaders, particularly those with extended exposure to the North American manner of war, or those born and raised in Canada, came to reject the conventional European manner of making war. Rather, they believed that the optimum war fighting technique was achieved by a mixed force that included the military strengths of regulars (e.g. courage, discipline, tactical acumen) with those of the volunteers and Indians (e.g. endurance, familiarity with wilderness navigation and travel, marksmanship) who relied more on initiative, independent action and small unit tactics than on rigid military practices and drills. The effectiveness of the Canadians was evidenced in the fear they created in their enemies. British generals and numerous contemporary English accounts conceded that the Canadian raiders “are well known to be the most dangerous enemy of any... reckoned equal, if not superior in that part of the world to veteran troops.”⁷

The impact of the French-Canadian raiders was immense. One British colonel confided, “I am ashamed that they have succeeded in all their scouting parties and that we never have any success in ours.”⁸ This state of affairs continually blinded the British Command and deprived them of intelligence of French preparations or plans. Understandably, this often led to poor and untimely decisions laden with unfortunate consequences, whether the ambush of a British column or the loss of a strategic fort.⁹ Moreover, the constant depredations, ambushes and raids of the Canadians and their Indian allies caused a constant material and economic drain on the British. But equally important, they created an overwhelming psychological and moral blow against the Anglo-American colonies. The British forces seemed unable to strike back. It was a constant series of defeats, thwarted campaigns and offensives, and devastated colonies. The Canadians and Indians would appear everywhere as phantoms in hit and run attacks, leaving in their wake smouldering ruins and the mutilated bodies of the dead and dying. Despite their small numbers, they consistently inflicted an unproportionally high number of casualties on the enemy. The end result was an utterly paralyzing effect on the English combatants and colonists alike.¹⁰

The unmitigated success of the French-Canadians raiders forced the British to develop a similar capability of their own. One of the first efforts was in 1744, in the North American theatre of operations, as part of the larger War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). During this conflict the British presence in the Maritimes was once again prey to the marauding Abenakis and Micmac Indian war parties that were aligned with the French. As a result, an “independent corps of rangers,”

also known as the corps of Nova Scotia Rangers, was raised in New England. Two companies were recruited and deployed to Annapolis, Nova Scotia in July 1744 to reinforce the garrison. In September, a third company arrived led by Captain John Goreham.

Goreham's command was composed of 60 Mohawks and Metis warriors. Familiar with the Indian way of war, they swiftly engaged the French and their Native allies. Massachusetts Governor William Shirley commended Goreham and his Rangers for their success, stating that "the garrison is now entirely free from alarms."¹¹ The majority of the companies later returned to Massachusetts where they originated, leaving Captain Goreham and his company to patrol Nova Scotia alone from 1746-1748. Their success was such that Shirley wrote, "the great service which Lieut. Colonel Gorham's [sic] Company of Rangers has been of to the Garrison at Annapolis Royal is a demonstration of the Usefulness of such a Corps."¹²

Goreham's Rangers continued to serve on the volatile frontier. Prior to the onset of the French and Indian War, also known in its global context as the Seven Years War (1756-1763), Goreham's rangers were used to protect the British settlements in Nova Scotia against Indian raids. However, with the official outbreak of the war, they became increasingly involved in military operations specifically because of their expertise at irregular warfare.¹³

Despite their success, the status of Goreham's Rangers was eclipsed by another British effort aimed at matching the effectiveness of the French-Canadian raiders in the strategically important Lake Champlain theatre of operations. What the British eventually created was the legendary Rogers Rangers. In the early stages of the war, when fortunes seemed to be against the British, Robert Rogers' knowledge and experience with the "haunts and passes of the enemy and the Indian method of fighting" soon brought him to the attention of his superior, Major-General William Johnson.¹⁴ By the fall of 1755, Rogers was conducting dangerous scouts deep behind enemy lines. Rogers' efforts soon earned him an overwhelming reputation. These efforts also led Major-General William Shirley, then the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in North America, to argue, "It is absolutely necessary for his Majesty's Service, that one Company at least of Rangers should be constantly employ'd in different Parties upon Lake George and Lake Iroquois [Lake Champlain], and the Wood Creek and Lands adjacent...to make Discoveries of the proper Routes for our own Troops, procure Intelligence of the Enemy's Strength and Motions,

destroy their out Magazines and Settlements, pick up small Parties of their Battoes upon the Lakes, and keep them under continual Alarm.”¹⁵

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Major Robert Rogers.”

By the winter of 1756, Rogers’ bold forays with his small band of unofficial rangers behind enemy French lines were regularly reported in newspapers throughout the colonies. They provided a tonic to a beleaguered English frontier. In March 1756, Major-General Shirley ordered Rogers to raise a 60-man independent ranger company that was separate from both the provincial and regular units. Accordingly, it was titled His Majesty’s Independent Company (later Companies) of American Rangers. His unit was directed to scout and gain intelligence in the Lake Champlain theatre, as well as “distress the French and their allies by sacking, burning and destroying their houses, barns, barracks, canoes, battoes...to way-lay, attack, and destroying their convoys of provisions by land and water.”¹⁶

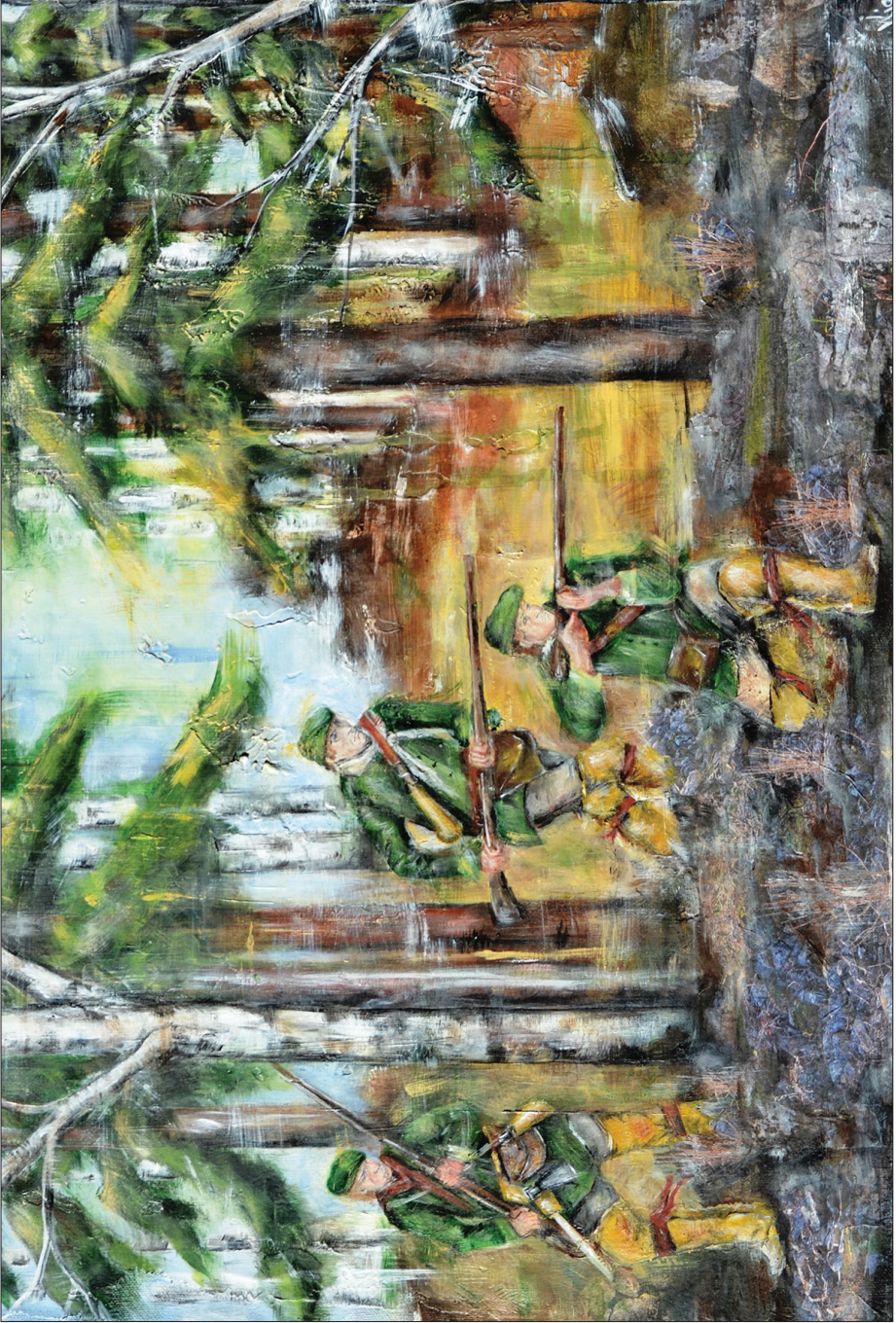
The reputation and accomplishments of the rangers soon had an impact on British officers. All wanted rangers to accompany their expeditions as a foil against

the enemy's Canadians and Indians, as well as the rangers' ability to navigate and survive in the merciless wilderness. Without doubt, Rogers' Rangers, as they became universally known, brought to life the ranger tradition in North America and ensured it would forever endure. Their deeds and prowess have with time become legendary, even if not fully deserved. Nonetheless, the Rangers, led by the very adventurous, courageous, and exceptionally tough Robert Rogers, created a very romantic image that seemed to both symbolize, as well as define, the strength of the North American Ranger.

Ironically, Rogers was repeatedly bested by his Canadian counterparts and normally suffered horrendous casualties. Generals Jeffrey Amherst and Thomas Gage considered the Canadians, owing to their skill and discipline superior to the American Rangers.¹⁷ In addition, throughout this period, Goreham's Rangers were also active. In 1758, they played an important part in the capture of the strategic Fortress of Louisbourg and a year later assisted in the expedition against Quebec. In fact, at the end of the conflict the British Command appraised Goreham's Rangers, although rarely mentioned, as the most highly rated ranger organization employed during the war.¹⁸

Certainly, the Canadian and American rangers established a tradition that depicted an adventurous, if not daring, attitude that was overly aggressive and always offensively minded. This ranger tradition that was created also embodied the concept of individuals who were seen as mavericks to the conventional military institution and mentality. In essence, men who were adaptable, robust and unconventional in their thinking and war fighting. Ultimately, men who could persevere in the greatest hardships and despite an inhospitable environment and merciless enemy, achieve mission success.¹⁹

Artwork by Brenda Wight



“Rogers’ Rangers – Forest Contact.”

CHAPTER 2

STRENGTH FROM WEAKNESS: THE WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE

While the tenacious spirit represented by the Ranger Tradition would remain with Canada's warriors and be resurrected in future generations, the more contemporary component of Canada's special operations/SOF legacy coincided with the explosion of special operations forces at the commencement of World War II (WWII). In essence, modern day SOF are largely a phenomenon of this era. They were largely born in crisis from a position of weakness. In the immediate aftermath of the early German victories, particularly after their expulsion from the European continent in May/June 1940, the Allies found themselves devoid of major equipment, of questionable military strength, in possession of an obsolete doctrine and on the defensive throughout the world.²⁰ As such, SOF were created to fill a specific gap in military capability.

Despite the still smouldering British equipment on the beaches of Dunkirk, the combative new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, declared in the British House of Commons on 4 June 1940, "we shall not be content with a defensive war."²¹ He was well aware that to win a war meant ultimately offensive action. Moreover, only through offensive action could an army provide the needed confidence and battle experience to its soldiers and leaders. Additionally, only offensive action could sustain public and military morale. Finally, offensive action represented a shift in initiative. By striking at the enemy, inherently an opponent is forced to take defensive measures, which represent a diversion of scarce resources.

That afternoon, Churchill penned a note to his Chief of Staff of the War Cabinet Secretariat, General Hastings Ismay. "We are greatly concerned ...with the dangers of the German landing in England," he wrote, "... why should it be thought impossible for us to do anything of the same kind to them?" He then added, "We should immediately set to work to organize self-contained, thoroughly-equipped raiding units."²² After all, pondered Churchill, "how wonderful it would be if the Germans could be made to wonder where they were going to be struck next, instead of forcing us to try to wall in the island and roof it over!"²³

On 6 June, Churchill sent yet another missive to Ismay. “Enterprises must be prepared,” he wrote, “with specially trained troops of the hunter class who can develop a reign of terror down these coasts, first of all on the butcher and bolt policy.” He vividly described, “There comes from the sea a hand of steel that plucks the German sentries from their posts.”²⁴ He then curtly directed that the “Joint Chiefs of the Staff to propose me measures for a vigorous, enterprising, and ceaseless offensive against the whole German-occupied coastline.” He added the requirement for deep inland raids that left “a trail of German corpses behind.”²⁵

Special Operations Executive (SOE)

As a direct result of Churchill’s urging, as well as those of a select few other senior military champions during the early years of the war, a plethora of SOF units and organizations such as the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the Commandos, the Long Range Desert Group (LRDG), the Special Air Service (SAS), the First Special Service Force (FSSF), and the American Rangers, to name a few, emerged creating a means to strike back at the seemingly invincible German military machine. One of the first unconventional efforts was the creation of the SOE, which was a British secret service organization intended to promote sabotage and subversion, as well as covert intelligence gathering, in enemy occupied territory. It was formed in July 1940, in the aftermath of the disastrous retreat from Dunkirk as England braced itself for the seemingly inevitable invasion. It was designed as a “full scale secret service, the mere existence of which could not be admitted either to Parliament or to the press.”²⁶ The SOE became responsible for “all operations of sabotage, secret subversive propaganda, the encouragement of civil resistance in occupied areas, the stirring up of insurrection, strikes, etc., in Germany or areas occupied by her.”²⁷

The Canadian connection was not long in coming.²⁸ Shortly after its creation, the SOE queried the senior Canadian Commander overseas, Major-General A.G.L. McNaughton, for Canadian volunteers. Specifically they were looking for French-Canadians for service in France, Canadians of Eastern European descent for the Balkans and Chinese Canadians for Far East operations. Clearly, the racial, linguistic and cultural attributes, and knowledge of these volunteers would provide the SOE with, in many aspects, ready-made operatives. Inculcating the specific technical skills would just be a matter of training.

The Canadian volunteers, like the remainder of the men and women trained to serve in the SOE during WWII “were quickly made to forget all thoughts about

Queensbury rules and so-called ‘gentlemanly’ warfare....[and they] were taught a vast range of sabotage techniques and bizarre methods of killing.”²⁹ Moreover, they were thoroughly trained in advising, arming and assisting members of the various resistance movements in the enemy-occupied countries.

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Midnight Rendezvous.”

As much of the art and science of SOF was in its infancy, it is not surprising that SOE selection was initially inefficient. At the beginning, it consisted of a three- to four-week selection/training course that SOE senior leaders eventually assessed as too leisurely and ineffective. Many of those on course were failed out at the end of the process which proved a waste of time and resources. Therefore, by July 1943 a four-day selection course (student assessment board (SAB)) was developed that applied a variety of psychological and practical tests to candidates over a four-day period. In this manner, they screened questionable volunteers out early. The SAB took less time and provided better results.

Successful volunteers went through several phases of training. The first phase focused on ensuring all operatives were in top physical condition. In addition, the course provided all with an in-depth proficiency with Allied and German small

arms, as well as expertise in explosives and demolition work. The first phase also provided instruction in the recognition of German uniforms and equipment. The next stage of training was conducted at the commando training centre in Arisaig, in the Western highlands of Scotland near the Isle of Skye. This phase provided rigorous field training and live fire exercises. Following the commando training came parachute qualification in Manchester, England. At the termination of qualification training, operatives were then separated according to their respective skills and sent to specialized training centres.

The Canadian connection to the SOE went beyond the volunteers who served in the organization. It also extended to the establishment of Special Training School (STS) 103 or Camp X, which was located on secluded farmland outside of Whitby, Ontario. The camp served two functions. The first was to train personnel recruited in Canada, such as French-Canadians and refugees from Eastern Europe for service with the SOE in Europe. The second function was to give top secret assistance to the American foreign intelligence service, an activity that could not be done in the United States (U.S.) as long as the U.S. remained neutral in the war.³⁰

Courtesy Lynn Philip Hodgson



Front gate of Camp X.

Camp X was the first secret-agent training establishment in North America. It opened on 9 December 1941, and trained individuals according to their cultural groups. The officers, less the camp adjutant, were all British, however, the senior non-commissioned officers were all Canadian. Camp X closed on 20 April 1944.

Throughout the war approximately 227 Canadians served in the SOE in the various theatres of the conflict. In addition, Canadian Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) personnel and those posted to Royal Air Force (RAF) units also served in the Special Duty Squadrons used to drop weapons and insert and extract SOE personnel.³¹

The value of the SOE was immense. In a Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 18 July 1945, General Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower’s staff noted, “without the organization, communications, training and leadership which SOE supplied...resistance [movements] would have been of no military value.”³²

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Drop into France.”

Furthermore, the report emphasized:

SOE operations made a substantial contribution to the victory of the Allied Expeditionary Force. Widespread and continuous sabotage action against railways and telecommunications supplemented the air effort and completed the confusion of the enemy. The four types of activity which paid military dividends were:

- a. Railways. These proved to be the most vulnerable targets for attack, resulting in an appreciable delay in the arrival of enemy divisions in the beach-head area and a marked slowing up of the moves of divisions from Norway.
- b. Diversions. Harassing guerrilla tactics in outlying districts induced the increased use and dispersion of protective and internal security troops as well as the use of field forces for punitive expeditions.
- c. Prevention of demolitions. Although only a small percentage of prepared plans could be carried out, we reaped such a rich harvest from the few which were effective, that the overall effort was warranted.
- d. Manpower for the Allied Expeditionary Force. Immediately on liberation disciplined and equipped forces were available for military, para-military and information duties.³³

In the end, undisputedly, the SOE was a unique wartime creation that represented innovation, adventure and a fanaticism by its personnel to the Allied cause. With extreme courage, tenacity, guile and an underlying “the end justifies the means” approach to war, the SOE, in consonance with Churchill’s directive and with an ever-present Canadian nexus, set Europe ablaze.

Viking Force

The SOE was not the only innovative, unconventional effort. In a remarkable display of military efficiency, by 8 June 1940, two days after Churchill’s directive, General Sir John Dill, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, received approval for the creation of the Commandos and that same afternoon, Section M.O. 9 of the War Office

(later to be replaced by Combined Operations Command) was established. Four days later, Churchill appointed Lieutenant-General Sir Alan Bourne, the Adjutant-General of the Royal Marines as “Commander of Raiding Operations on Coasts in Enemy Occupation and Advisor to the Chiefs of Staff on Combined Operations.”³⁴

The men drawn to the Commando idea very quickly coalesced the concept that was expected. Raiding was their primary role. In essence, they were to be trained to be “hard hitting assault troops” who were capable of working in cooperation with the Navy and Air Force. As such, they were expected to capture strong points, destroy enemy services, neutralize coastal batteries and wipe out any designated enemy force by surprise as detailed by higher headquarters.³⁵ They were also told that they would have to become accustomed to longer hours, more work and less rest than the other members of the armed forces.

Predictably, the concept of commandos attracted a like-minded group of aggressive, action-orientated individuals who quickly shaped the essence of the commando idea. “There was a sense of urgency, a striving to achieve an ideal, an individual determination to drive the physical body to the limit of endurance to support a moral resolve,” one veteran officer explained. “The individual determination,” he added, “was shared by every member of the force, and such heights of collective idealism are not often reached in the mundane business of soldiering.”³⁶ Together they forged a “commando spirit” that comprised of determination; enthusiasm and cheerfulness, particularly under adverse conditions; individual initiative and self-reliance; and finally, comradeship.³⁷

Canada was initially slow to react to the commando concept. Moreover, its commitment to creating an elite Commando unit in World War II did not last very long, betraying the nation’s underlining sentiment towards SOF type units. In fact, the creation of the Canadian “Viking Force” was actually a response to public criticism at home and the opportunity the British raiding program provided. Major-General Harry D.G. Crerar, reacting to public criticism and government pressure to get Canadian troops into the fray, since they had been in England for almost two years and had still not engaged in battle with the enemy, took the initiative as the acting Commander of the Canadian Corps and spoke to his immediate superior, Lieutenant-General Bernard Law Montgomery, Commander 12 Corps and responsible for home defence of Britain, about utilizing Canadian troops in a commando role.



Canadian Commandos scaling cliffs during training.

Montgomery was not a proponent of SOF forces but he did see raiding as a means to instill offensive spirit and combat experience within his Command. “These raids,” he wrote, “even though quite small, are going to give us the opportunity of training our commanders, and staffs in the planning and conduct of actual battle ventures, and our regimental officers and men will begin to smell the battle atmosphere.”³⁸

As a result, Crerar did not have a hard sell. “I believe that occasions will increasingly present themselves for small raids across the Channel opposite the Army front,” Crerar argued. He added, “in default of a reputation built up in battle the [Canadian] Corps undoubtedly would receive great stimulus if, in the near future it succeeded in making a name for itself for its raiding activities – a reputation which, incidentally, it very definitely earned for itself in the last war.”³⁹ Montgomery replied, “your men should be quite first class at raiding” and he gave Crerar the green light to run Canadian raiding activities from the port of Newhaven.⁴⁰ In fact, Montgomery went so far as to say, “We want to get every platoon in every battalion highly trained in the art of raiding as soon as possible.”⁴¹

Crerar lost no time and on 6 March 1942 discussed raiding operations with the Director Combined Operations, Lord Louis Mountbatten. Mountbatten was initially reluctant to accept Canadian participation in raiding because he felt that it would dilute the role of the British Commandos who had a monopoly on the activity. However, Mountbatten was well attuned to political realities and made an exception. He laid out two conditions for the Canadians:

- a. that ample time should be allowed for proper organization and training – this was stated to be six to eight weeks; and
- b. that the enterprise should be known only to the Corps Commander and BGS [Brigadier-General (Staff)] and a limited number of his own (Mountbatten’s) staff.⁴²

That afternoon a second meeting between Crerar, BGS Guy Simonds and Brigadier J.C. Haydon, Commander Special Service Force (SSF), or Commandos, transpired.⁴³ In this forum the senior officers present reached a decision to create a Canadian commando unit of 200 men, who were to start training by mid-March.

The Canadian Commando unit, named Viking Force, was based on 2nd Division. Within a fortnight 267 volunteers from the division were training at Seaford in the

muddy estuary of the Cuckmere River in Sussex. The Viking Force organization was based on a British Commando but built on a smaller scale. The headquarters section was led by a major and comprised 24 all ranks. A further 36 officers and men staffed the support squadron (i.e. intelligence, signals and medical sections). The remaining 130 personnel were divided into two troops each consisting of five officers and 60 men. The Viking Force placed heavy emphasis on firepower. In addition to the standard .303 Lee Enfield rifle, each troop carried four Bren light machine guns and eight Thompson sub-machine guns, as well as two anti-tank rifles and a two inch mortar.

Within days of the commencement of training instructors whittled the large group of volunteers down to its official strength of 190 all ranks. From 4 April 1942, personnel from the British Commandos joined the men of Viking Force to increase the intensity of the training and begin to turn them into hardened commandos. The commanding officer (CO) responsible for whipping the Canadian neophyte commandos into shape was Major Brian McCool of the Royal Regiment of Canada.

During the last half of April 1942, training intensified. It now included speed marches with weapons and 27 kilogram (60 pound) rucksacks, river crossings, leaping from crags into sand pits 15 feet below, cliff climbing and night manoeuvres. During these training exercises if the men did not get back to the beaches in time to be ferried to the mother ship they had to swim back with their full equipment.⁴⁴

On 30 April, Montgomery visited Major-General Andrew McNaughton, the Canadian Corps Commander, and they agreed that the Canadians should form the main striking force for a planned raid on the French port of Dieppe. That same day McNaughton's headquarters issued a training instruction to enlarge the scale of combined operations training. This new direction was designed to cover the training of 4 and 6 Brigades for the large conventional raid planned on Dieppe. Therefore, before Viking Force was even fully established, BGS Simonds had already laid the blueprint for their demise. "Personnel of detachments which have completed [combined operations/commando] training in accordance with Instruction No. 7," he ordered, "will be returned to parent units and employed as a cadre to develop combined operations techniques within the latter."⁴⁵

As a result, Viking Force became swept up in the preparations for Operation Rutter (i.e. the Dieppe Raid) and the intensive training that had been reserved for the elite

of Viking Force was now extended to the entirety of 4 and 6 Brigades. Quite simply, Major McCool and his cadre became instructors for the others. In this regard, from the end of May to the beginning of July the Viking Force cadre became key to the efforts to help 4 and 6 Brigades master the rigours of amphibious warfare.

Photographer Captain Frank Royal, DND/LAC, PA 113245



Amphibious Assault training.

However, with the emphasis on conventional forces to take over the raiding role it was not surprising that Crerar wrote on 4 June 1942, “The opportunity to land on enemy shores may not long be denied us.” He added, “The training of detachments, units and formations of the Canadian Corps, with this end in view has already proceeded some distance...It is the intention that it shall be carried through to the stage when every formation of the Corps is thoroughly capable of taking full part in operations involving the landing on beaches in enemy occupation, and the rapid seizure and development of ‘bridgeheads.’” He ended his missive with a revealing, “There must be no need for the Canadian Corps to call upon outside, and special ‘Commando’ units for assistance in initial beach-landing operations.”⁴⁶

The new Canadian approach was a polar opposite to the original intent. Viking Force had been intended as a hard-hitting group of specially trained raiders whose

job was to inflict damage on the enemy in limited operations using surprise as a major element and then employing their skills to withdraw before the enemy had time to recover. Diluted among the battalions in 4 and 6 Brigades during the ill-fated Dieppe Raid on 19 August 1942, the original Viking Force commandos were never given the opportunity to do the job they had been trained for. In the aftermath of the disastrous raid no effort was made to resurrect Viking Force.⁴⁷

Royal Canadian Navy Beach Commandos

The Dieppe Raid, however, did lead to the establishment of another SOF-like Canadian organization, namely the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) Beach Commandos. Their genesis stemmed from the Dieppe Raid where Royal Naval (RN) Beach Parties (“C”, “D”, and “H”) were responsible for disembarking troops and vehicles from assault landing craft, organizing and supervising suitable “beach” areas and loading serviceable vessels at the time of withdrawal. Of the 200 Navy personnel assigned to the Beach Parties during the Dieppe Raid, 63 became casualties. As a result, all three RN Beach Parties had to be totally reconstituted. Not surprisingly, soon after Dieppe the Admiralty decided to change the Combined Operations Beach Party Branch name to “Naval Commandos.” Accordingly, the Admiralty directed that 20 Beach Commandos would be required for the invasion of Occupied Europe (i.e. two each for three assault divisions, one per assault brigade with 100 percent spare in reserve).⁴⁸

The RCN soon created its own capability and in late 1943 established RCN Beach Commando “W.” This unit was modeled upon its Royal Navy counterpart and comprised of 84 RCN Volunteer Reserve men (i.e. 12 officers and 72 ratings). The naval beach commando was described as “a unit especially trained in the control and handling of landing craft on the beaches ...[and] is designed to handle landing ships, craft and barges of an assault brigade group and the further ships, craft and barges landed on the same beaches.”⁴⁹ Beach commandos were also responsible for neutralizing beach obstacles, mines and booby traps.

LAC, PA 183055



**A RCN Naval Beach Commando demonstrates how to
silently incapacitate a sentry.**

RCN Beach Commando “W” was assigned to Force “J” on Juno Beach during the Normandy invasion on 6 June 1944 and served with valour and distinction. Canadian newspapers quickly trumpeted the role of the Beach Commandos and described them as the “leather tough Canadians” and “tough, scrappy and self-reliant.”⁵⁰ Beach Commando “W” was disbanded at the end of August 1944.



Members of RCN Beach Commando “W” take a cigarette break after hard training.

1st Canadian Parachute Battalion

Canada’s SOF legacy in WWII did not end with the Dieppe Raid. One month prior to the disastrous assault, another “SOF-like” organization that fits into the legacy of Canada’s CANSOF community was created, namely the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (1 Cdn Para Bn). Although contemporary airborne units are not considered SOF, 1 Cdn Para Bn like many of the neophyte airborne organizations that sprang up early in World War II meets many of the SOF criteria. The paratroopers were specially selected, specially trained and given special missions behind enemy lines. They possessed an indomitable spirit that defied any challenge. In fact, the selection rate for 1 Cdn Para Bn in its infancy was only 30 percent. Individuals volunteering for the unit had to be recommended by their commanding officer, undergo a file review and psychological testing, as well as pass a selection course that among other activities tested the candidates on small party tasks.⁵¹

At its creation both the Army's generals, as well as the media at large, were clear on the type of individual and organization they were creating. Robert Taylor, a reporter for the *Toronto Daily Star*, described the volunteers as "action-hungry and impatient to fill their role as the sharp, hardened tip of the Canadian army's 'dagger pointed at the heart of Berlin.'" ⁵² Senior military officers described the new Canadian paratroopers as "super-soldiers" and newspapers, with unanimity, invariably described the parachute volunteers as "hard as nails" representing the toughest and smartest soldiers in the Canadian Army. ⁵³ One journalist wrote, "They are good, possibly great soldiers, hard, keen, fast-thinking and eager for battle," while another asserted that they were "Canada's most daring and rugged soldiers . . . daring because they'll be training as paratroops: rugged because paratroops do the toughest jobs in hornet nests behind enemy lines." ⁵⁴ Others painted a picture of virtual super-men. "Picture men with muscles of iron," depicted one writer, "dropping in parachutes, hanging precariously from slender ropes, braced for any kind of action . . . these toughest men who ever wore khaki." ⁵⁵ Another simply explained that "your Canadian paratrooper is an utterly fearless, level thinking, calculating killer possessive of all the qualities of a delayed-action time bomb." ⁵⁶

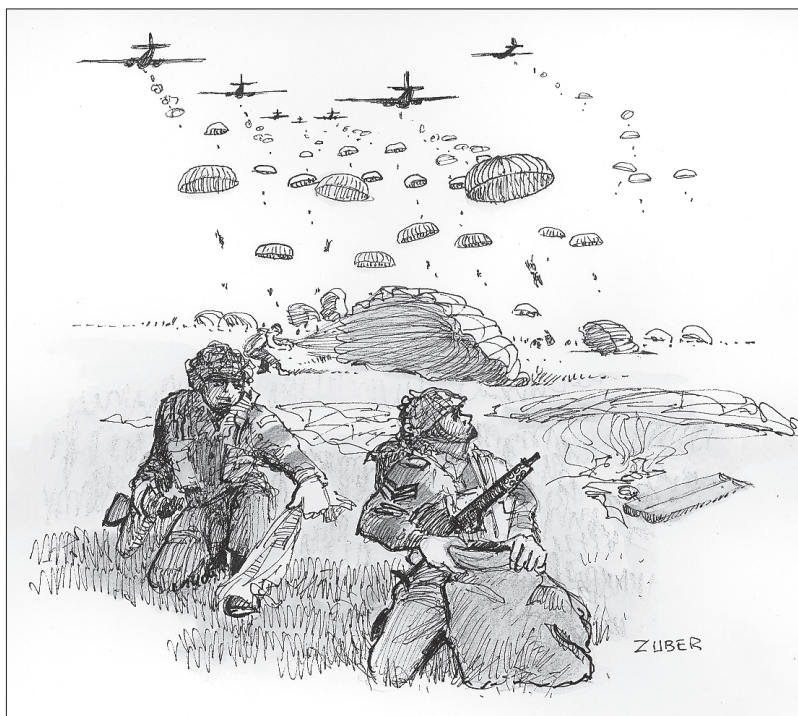
But it had not always been that way. Initially, the senior generals had rejected the need for Canadian paratroops, citing a lack of role and purpose for such specialized troops in the Canadian context. However, by the spring of 1942, both the British and Americans fully embraced the concept of airborne forces. And, as the tide of the war began to swing in favour of the Allies, the focus quickly swung from one of defence to that of offense. Moreover, nothing embodied raw offensive, aggressive action more than paratroopers! Very quickly, airborne troops became a defining component of a modern army. Not to be left out, senior Canadian military commanders quickly reversed their earlier reservations and recommended the establishment of a parachute battalion to J.L. Ralston, the MND. The Minister readily agreed and on 1 July 1942, the Canadian War Cabinet Committee approved the formation of a parachute unit, namely 1 Cdn Para Bn.



1 Cdn Para Bn practice jump in England.

The Unit's training was in many ways innovative for the time and exceeded the challenges faced by other combat troops. Greater emphasis was placed on the individual soldier for leadership, weapon handling and navigation. Orders for exercises and later operations were always given to all ranks so that regardless of circumstances of a parachute drop everyone had an understanding of the mission so that they could execute the necessary tasks whether or not officers or senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were present. As such, the Unit placed an exorbitant emphasis on courage, physical fitness, tenacity and particularly on individual initiative.

Artwork by Ted Zuber



1 Cdn Para Bn Assault Crossing of the Rhine River.

With no domestic defence role in Canada, the Unit was offered up to the Commander of Home Forces in England. The British quickly accepted the offer and the Canadian Government announced in March 1943, that 1 Cdn Para Bn would be attached to the 3rd Parachute Brigade, as part of the 6th Airborne Division. For the remainder of the war the Battalion fought as part of a British formation. It established a remarkable record. The Battalion never failed to complete an assigned mission, nor did it ever lose or surrender an objective once taken. The Canadian paratroopers were among the first Allied soldiers to have landed in occupied Europe, the only Canadians who participated in the “Battle of the Bulge” in the Ardennes, and by the end of the war they had advanced deeper into Germany than any other Canadian unit. Unquestionably, the paratroopers of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, at great cost and personal sacrifice, pioneered a new innovative form of warfare and demonstrated agility of thought and action, as well as an unrivalled warfare spirit in their daring assaults behind enemy lines. They were disbanded on 30 September 1945 at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The First Special Service Force

Interestingly, in July 1942, at the same time as 1 Cdn Para Bn was established, the Canadian War Cabinet authorized a second “parachute” unit, designated the 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion (2 Cdn Para Bn). The name of this unit, however, was misleading. It was not a parachute battalion at all, but rather a commando unit. The designation was assigned for security reasons to cover the true nature of its operational mandate.⁵⁷ On 25 May 1943, the name was changed to reflect this reality. It was re-designated the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion and it represented the Canadian element of the joint U.S./Canadian First Special Service Force (FSSF).⁵⁸

Nonetheless, its genesis originated in England with Lord Mountbatten’s Combined Operations Command Headquarters and Prime Minister’s Churchill personal support. The original concept, code named Operation Plough, entailed a guerrilla force capable of operations in Norway to attack the hydro-electric and heavy water plants in that country to disrupt the German war industry and the Nazi atomic weapons program.⁵⁹ Some thought was also put to using the force to destroy the Ploesti oil fields in Romania or to destroy hydro-electric facilities in Italy. In all, the planners reasoned that in any of these targets a hard hitting raiding force would not only damage Germany’s vital war industry but it would also tie up German forces required to protect facilities and chase down the guerrilla force.⁶⁰

The Americans accepted the project and Prime Minister Churchill and Lord Mountbatten very quickly convinced the Canadians to participate as well. As a result, a U.S./Canadian brigade sized formation was created with Americans and Canadians serving side by side, wearing the same American uniform, in a military command that was completely integrated. At any given moment it was impossible to differentiate Canadian from American and vice versa. Each had officers commanding troops of the other nation. At inception, the Canadians contributed 697 all ranks to the formation, representing approximately a quarter of the total number of troops.⁶¹

Canadian Airborne Forces Museum (CAFM)



FSSF mountain warfare training.

As was the case with 1 Cdn Para Bn, the Canadian Army took their commitment seriously and attempted to pick the best soldiers possible for this unique endeavour. Colonel Robert T. Frederick, the American Commander of the FSSF, made it clear that he preferred that Canadian volunteers be chosen in the “lower ranks between 18 and 45 [years old], physically rugged and mentally agile, physically able and willing to take parachute training.”⁶² It became obvious to everyone concerned that superior physical fitness, experience, maturity, and youth were the cornerstones on which the FSSF would be forged.⁶³ In addition, Frederick also stressed that it was imperative that each man be able to work efficiently independently or in small groups, regardless of the tactical situation or operational theatre.

Ross Munro, a renowned Canadian war reporter, noted that the FSSF “will be a continental edition of commandos of the British Army.” He added, “In selecting the men to make it up, emphasis will be placed on ‘youth, hardness and fitness.’”⁶⁴

As the initial focus of the FSSF was to be sabotage, raiding and guerrilla type warfare, the Forcemen were trained in a wide spectrum of skills including parachuting, demolitions, unarmed combat, extensive weapons handling, mountaineering and arctic warfare. Physical fitness very quickly became the decisive selection tool. Only the hardest of men could persevere the training. For instance, members of the FSSF were “capable of marching 35 miles a day across rough country or 90 miles without rest.”⁶⁵

Training was rigorous for good reason. The Force was scheduled to deploy to Norway on 15 December 1942 for an arduous and very dangerous mission. As such, even as the FSSF was in the process of establishing itself, its training regime and tempo was in over-drive. Upon arrival, members undertook their jump training, which in some cases, was all of 48 hours as opposed to the more standard three week course. In August 1942, journalist Don Mason captured the contemporary image of the force that was being created in Helena, Montana where they were based. “The cream of Canada’s hard-fighting army youth,” he described, “is training in the United States today for ‘aerial commando’ raiding which one day soon will make the German and the Jap think cyclones have struck where they thought they were safe and secure.”⁶⁶

Nonetheless, by September 1942 it became clear that Operation Plough was not going to happen. There were three major impediments. First, Frederick’s request for the temporary diversion of 750 Lancaster bombers forecast for the middle of January 1943 to insert his formation hit an immediate wall. The intractable architect of Britain’s strategic bombing campaign, Air Chief Marshal Charles Portal of the Royal Air Force (RAF), responded, “That is our best bomber.” He continued, “if you can show us where Plough can accomplish more in its operation than one thousand Lancasters could do on the bombing runs we shall consider the plane for your uses.”⁶⁷

Frederick’s next dose of reality occurred when the Combined Operations Command planners briefed him on the Commando raiding program and, more importantly, the work of Brigadier Colin Gubbins’ SOE and their Norwegian sabotage campaign. Although the SOE had never even heard of the Plough Project, or the FSSF for that matter, they too had plans for sabotaging most of the targets that the FSSF was theoretically earmarked to destroy. Significantly, Gubbins’ plan required very few aircraft and only two or three SOE trained Norwegian commandos for each target.⁶⁸

The final nail in the coffin resulted from Colonel Frederick's discussion with Major-General Hansteen, the Commander-in-Chief of the Norwegian Armed Forces. Hansteen bluntly informed Frederick that the King and Prime Minister of Norway opposed the concept of the Plough Project. They were concerned that the large-scale destruction of power would create a greater hardship on the Norwegian people than it would on the Germans. Moreover, although they welcomed any assistance in ousting the occupying German forces, they did not wish to do so by destroying the vital industrial infrastructure that was key to Norway's economic well-being.⁶⁹

And so, with no apparent aircraft, no host country support and a competing organization that appeared to have a more efficient, more precise and less resource-intensive means of achieving the same goal, Colonel Frederick quickly realized that the Plough Project was doomed. Any doubt he may have harboured was quickly dashed when he returned to London to meet with Lord Mountbatten prior to his flight to Washington D.C.. The Chief of Combined Operations Command candidly explained to Frederick that the Plough Project was no longer a pressing issue. By this time, Combined Operations and the whole raiding concept was under siege by the War Office. The Allied effort, particularly as a result of American might and industrial capacity, was slowly beginning to turn the tide of the war. Raiding and subversive activities, never fully supported by the mainstream military, were further marginalized as large-scale conventional operations, such as the invasion of Northern Africa took shape.

Moreover, Mountbatten had no means of influencing the release of aircraft and he conceded that SOE provided a more economical means of achieving the desired result, not to mention at a more politically acceptable price for the Norwegian government in exile in London. As such, both men agreed to let Plough die. Frederick quickly sent a message to his formation in Helena, Montana. True to Frederick's character – it was short and to the point:

Suspend effort on present line...New plan may be radically different and not concerned with hydroelectric or other industrial installations.... Cease training on hydroelectric installations and ...stress general tactical training, to include attack of fortifications, pill boxes, barracks and troop concentrations. Change in weapons may be necessary to provide greater firepower, so suspend further small arms training pending a decision.⁷⁰

On his return to North America, Colonel Frederick briefed General George Marshall, the American Army Chief of Staff. He then left for Montana unsure whether the FSSF would be continued or scrapped. That decision was now left with the General Staff to get a political decision. By 8 October 1942, the Canadian Chief of the General Staff forwarded a telegram to Lieutenant-General McNaughton, Canada's overseas commander, informing him of the latest turn of events. The Canadians were now waiting for the Americans to make known their intentions prior to articulating their continuing support.

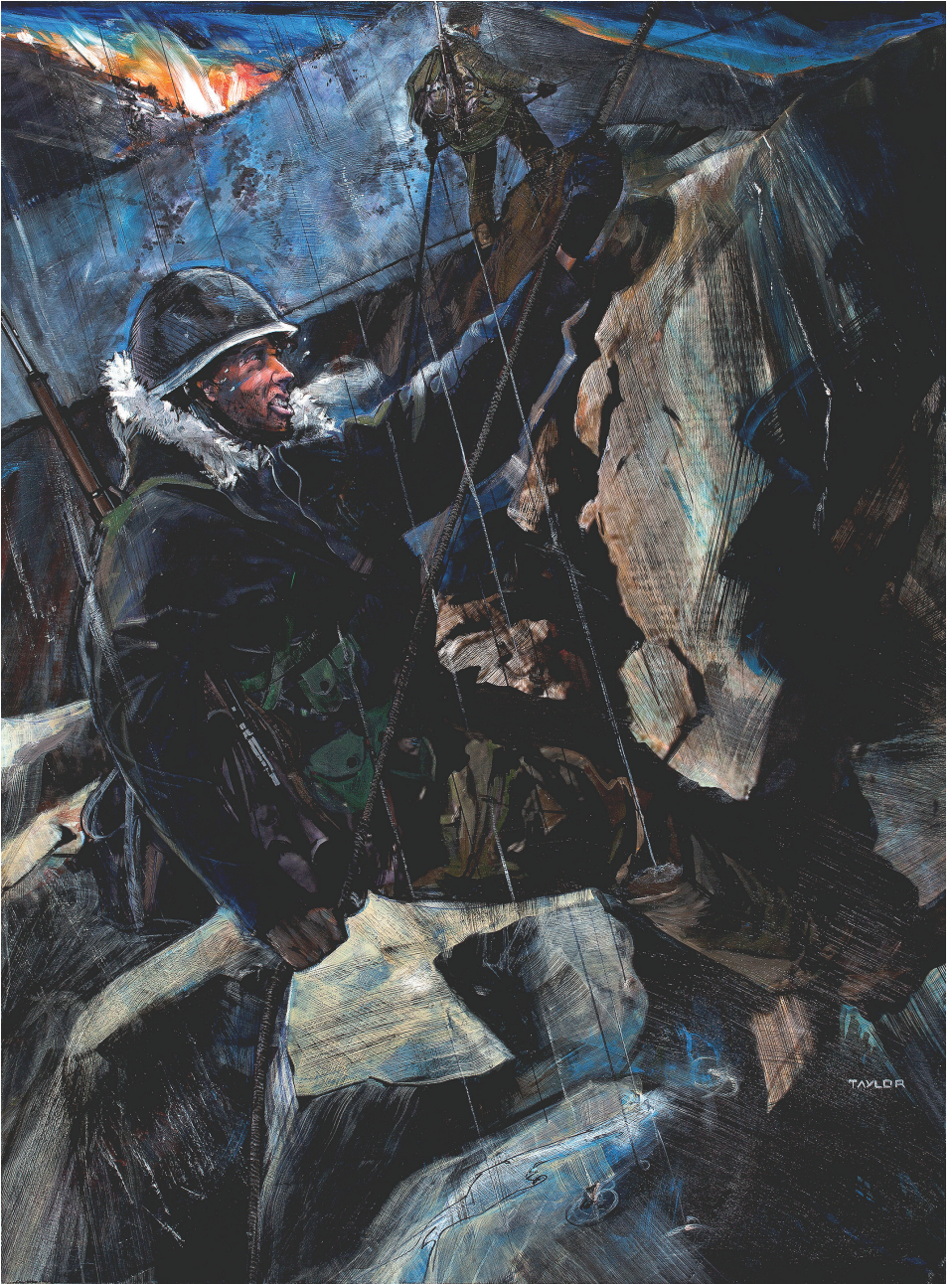
However, Major-General George Murchie's missive provided some telling clues. The alternatives considered were:

- A. Continue with Special Service Force if Americans so desire.
- B. Amalgamate with 1st Parachute Battalion.
- C. Disband and Disperse Personnel.
- D. Retain as an Ordinary Parachute Battalion For Service at Home and Abroad.⁷¹

Importantly, Murchie highlighted the negative effects of options B, C and D. He stated each has the "disadvantage of unwelcome publicity over cancellation of highly publicized Special Service Forces as have B and C over apparent curtailment of our plans for Cdn [Canadian] Parachute Troops."⁷²

In due course the Americans decided to proceed with the FSSF. On 17 October, General Marshall informed Major-General Maurice Pope, the Chairman of the Canadian Joint Staff in Washington D.C. that a decision was reached to retain the FSSF as a special unit.⁷³ It was now up to the Canadians to confirm their continued participation. Although militarily a will to continue seemed to be present, the ultimate decision was the purview of the politicians.⁷⁴ As such, the War Cabinet Committee discussed the issue on 28 October 1942. From a Canadian perspective the existence of the "elite" First Special Service Force was considered by the government to be of marginal operational value after its original mission was cancelled. The Minutes of the War Cabinet Committee noted, "Though the future employment of the unit was doubtful, beyond its existence as a 'stand-by' force, acceptance of the U.S. proposal [continue unit's existence for special operations] was recommended as a token of intimate co-operation between the two countries."⁷⁵

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Scaling Monte La Difensa.”

As such, the FSSF became in many ways highly specialized infantry capable of a wide range of operations in virtually any terrain. In August 1943, the FSSF participated in the assault on Kiska Island. Since the Japanese had already withdrawn from the Aleutians in a dense fog unknown to the Allied invasion force, the FSSF was quickly returned to the mainland and prepared for operations in Italy. Here the Force made a name for itself because of its successful assault on Monte La Difensa, a seemingly impregnable German defensive position on the top of a 945-metre high (3,100 feet) mountain. The Germans had repelled numerous Allied attacks to date and thus, delayed the advance towards the main German Gustav defensive Line and Rome, which lay beyond. On 3 December 1943, by a daring night assault that entailed climbing up the rear cliffs of the mountain, which the Germans considered impassable, the FSSF successfully captured the summit. It took another six days of hard fighting to secure the entire saucer-shaped mountain top and extend their grip to the adjacent Monte La Remetanea. However, more damaging to the FSSF was the subsequent prolonged mountain campaign that continued until the end of January 1944. The hard fighting in the mountains added to the casualties incurred during the battle for Monte La Difensa. In total, the mountain campaign inflicted a terrible toll on the formation. In the aftermath of the battles, the FSSF would never reach its former level of specialized capability or personnel. Reinforcements were simply pulled directly from normal reinforcement pools and given familiarization training on American weapons and tactics.

Nonetheless, the FSSF reinforced its reputation at Anzio in February 1944 where, despite their light armament and only approximately 1,200 all ranks, they held an extended portion (13 kilometres) of the vital Mussolini Canal sector. Through aggressive night raiding they struck fear into the enemy, who believed they were facing up to a small division. The German soldiers were so terrified of the FSSF raids that they nicknamed them the “Black Devils.” In the subsequent break-out phase the FSSF advanced on Rome. Upon its capture and a brief period of rest and recuperation, the Force seized two of the Hyères Islands in the Mediterranean Sea to protect the left flank of the landings on the French Riviera in August 1944 during Operation Dragoon, the invasion of Southern France. The FSSF then joined the Sixth Army Group in the advance through Southern France to the Italian border.

Artwork by Silvia Pecota



“The Black Devils. Anzio 1944.”

The Canadian component of the FSSF, however, proved to be problematic for the Canadian Government. Facing a manning shortage and as a result, a conscription crisis, the continuing demands to provide reinforcements for the FSSF, which was difficult to administer and in the context of the dying days of the war was also arguably redundant, the Canadian Government made a simple decision. The time had come to pull the Canadians from the Force. As a result, the FSSF was disbanded at Villeneuve-Loubet, France, on 5 December 1944.

The disbandment of the FSSF was not surprising. As the tide of the war shifted in favour of the Allies, who by late 1942 had begun to field large modern armies, SOF evolved to provide specific capabilities not resident with the larger conventional military and perform distinct tasks such as raiding, sabotage and economy of effort missions to tie down enemy forces. These activities were soon eclipsed by tasks such as strategic reconnaissance and unconventional warfare. But even at that, the Allied strategy had become a very attritional, conventional approach, much akin to

a large steam roller simply flattening the opposition before it. As such, the precision and special capabilities provided by SOF were neither required, nor appreciated by most senior military commanders.

Artwork by Silvia Pecota



“The Black Devils. Clearing No-Man’s Land.”

In the end, despite the overall success and value of special operations, SOF never fully received acceptance by the larger military community.⁷⁶ The irregular nature of the tactics, the unconventional, if not rakish nature of the operators, who were often seen as lacking discipline and military decorum, as well as the almost independent status of the SOF organizations were alien and distasteful to the more traditional and conservative minded military leadership. Not surprisingly, at the end of the war, as already noted, most SOF organizations were disbanded.

Canada was no different. In fact, Lieutenant-General McNaughton provided a clear picture of his perception of SOF. “I have watched with interest the organization here

[England] of such special units as Commandos, Ski Battalions and Paratroops,” he noted. He concluded, “The cycle is always the same – initial enthusiasm which is very high, drawing good officers and men from regular units, distracting and unsettling others, and upsetting the units’ organization.” In the end, he unabashedly stated his opposition to the formation of such units.⁷⁷

CHAPTER 3

SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN THE COLD WAR

In the aftermath of World War II, two ideologically opposed superpowers, namely, the United States and the Soviet Union, emerged from the conflict and subsequently dramatically changed the world. Exacerbating the political and military competition between these former allies of convenience was technology. The war had sparked exponential advancements in warfare. Specifically, jet engines, large aircraft carriers and submarines, rockets and nuclear weapons made the world that much smaller, and countries that much more vulnerable.

In 1949, the West created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a hedge against perceived Soviet intentions of westward expansion in Europe. Soon after the establishment of NATO, the Soviets created the Warsaw Pact, pressing its occupied territories into an alliance to ostensibly protect them from Western aggression. By 1948, an “iron curtain” descended that basically split the world into American/NATO and Soviet spheres of influence. Faced with the prospect of nuclear Armageddon if the major antagonists faced off directly, the superpower competition soon played itself out in proxy wars in Korea, Africa, and the Middle East. This Cold War dynamic shaped much, if not all, of the international political and military/security landscape for the next four decades.

From a Canadian perspective, the Cold War shaped its military and political culture, and organization as well. Not surprisingly, the end of World War II, as noted, all Canadian SOF units had been disbanded by September 1945. However, a brief breath of air seemed to rekindle the flames of a national SOF capability in 1947. Former members of the SOE, FSSF and 1st Cdn Para Bn developed a plan to resurrect a distinct Canadian SOF entity. Their methodology was as shadowy as the unit they intended to build.

Their methods, however, were based on the conditions of the period. The long costly global struggle had taken its toll and a debt-ridden and war-weary Government

was intent on a post-war army that was anything but extravagant. Notwithstanding the military's achievements during the war, the Canadian Government articulated two clear requirements for its peacetime army. Firstly, it was to consist of a representative group of all arms of the service. Secondly, its primary purpose was to provide a small but highly trained and skilled professional force that in time of conflict could expand and train the citizen soldiers who would fight that war. With the creation of NATO, military priority was focused on large armoured battle and brigade groups. From the perspective of senior military commanders, within this framework, SOF had no relevance whatsoever.

The Canadian Special Air Service Company

As the Army worked feverishly at demobilizing and at the same time creating the structure for the post-war Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Major George Flint, the CO of the small Canadian Parachute Training Centre in Shilo, Manitoba, became instrumental in the next phase of Canadian SOF.⁷⁸ He selectively culled the ranks of the disbanded 1 Cdn Para Bn, which also included those from the FSSF and the SOE. Quite simply, he chose the best from the pool of personnel who had decided to remain in the Active Force to act as instructors and staff for his training establishment.

Devoid of any direction from Army Headquarters, the CO and his staff focussed on making contacts and keeping up to date with the latest airborne developments. These prescient efforts were soon to be rewarded. It was the perpetuation of links with Canada's closest allies, as well as the importance of staying abreast of the latest tactical developments in modern warfare, specifically air-transportability, that provided the breath of life that airborne and SOF advocates were searching for.

Not surprisingly, Canadian commanders were looking abroad for the way ahead in the post-war environment. As such, in 1947, a National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) study revealed that British peacetime policy was based on training and equipping all infantry formations to be air-transportable. Discussions with allies quickly ascertained that both the British and Americans would welcome an Airborne Establishment in Canada that would be capable of filling in the "gaps in their knowledge" – specifically in areas such as the problem of standardization of equipment between Britain and the United States, and the need for experimental research into cold weather conditions. To its allies, Canada was the ideal intermediary.

Canadian military leaders quickly realized that cooperation with their closest defence partners would allow the country to benefit from an exchange of information on the latest defence developments and doctrine. For the airborne and SOF advocates, a test facility would allow the Canadian military to stay in the game. In the end, for the sake of efficiency of manpower and resources, NDHQ directed that the parachute training and research functions reside in a single Canadian Joint Army/Air Training Centre. As a result, on 15 August 1947, the Joint Air School (JAS), in Rivers, Manitoba was established.

The JAS became the “foot in the door” for the nation’s SOF legacy. It was responsible for the retention of skills required for airborne and with some ingenuity special operations, for both the Army and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). Importantly, the JAS, which was renamed the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre (CJATC) on 1 April 1949, provided the seed from which a SOF organization would eventually grow.⁷⁹

The methodology to get higher approval, however, was not totally transparent. Nonetheless, the hidden agenda of the airborne advocates quickly took root. Once the permanent structure of the Army was established in 1947, they quickly pushed to expand the airborne capability within the JAS by submitting a proposal in the spring for a Canadian Special Air Service Company (Cdn SAS Coy).⁸⁰ This new organization was to be an integral sub-unit of the Army component of the JAS with a mandate of filling Army, inter-service, and public duties such as Army/Air tactical research and development; demonstrations to assist with Army/Air training; Airborne Firefighting; Search and Rescue; and Aid to the Civil Power.⁸¹ Its development, however, contrary to the tasks emphasized to the senior decision-makers, proved to be quite different as its name, Special Air Service, implied.

The initial proposal for the special sub-unit prescribed a clearly defined role. The Army, which sponsored the establishment of the fledgling organization, portrayed the Cdn SAS Coy’s inherent mobility as a definite asset to the public at large for domestic operations. A military appreciation written by its proponents argued the need of the unit in terms of its potential benefit to the public. It explained that the specially trained company would provide an “efficient life and property saving organization capable of moving from its base to any point in Canada in ten to fifteen hours.”⁸² Furthermore, the Cdn SAS Coy was framed as critical in working in support of the RCAF air search and rescue duties required by the International Civil Aviation Organization agreement.



“Canadian Special Air Service Company.”

The proposed training plan further supported the benevolent image. The training cycle consisted of four phases broken down as follows:

1. Tactical Research and Development (parachute related work and fieldcraft skills);
2. Airborne Firefighting;
3. Air Search and Rescue; and
4. Mobile Aid to the Civil Power (crowd control, first aid, military law).⁸³

Conspicuously absent was any evidence of commando or specialist training which the organization’s name innately implied. After all, the Cdn SAS Coy was actually titled after the British wartime Special Air Service (SAS) that earned a reputation for daring commando operations behind enemy lines.

In September 1947, the request for approval for the sub-unit was forwarded to the Deputy Chief of the General Staff. Significantly, it now had two additional roles added to it, namely, public service in the event of a national catastrophe and provision of a nucleus for expansion into parachute battalions. However, the proposal

also noted that the Cdn SAS Coy was required to provide the manpower for the large program of test and development that was underway by the Tactical Research and Development Wing, as well as demonstration teams for all demonstrations within and outside the CJATC.⁸⁴

As support for the sub-unit grew, so too did its real identity. An assessment of potential benefits to the Army included its ability to “keep the techniques employed by [British] SAS persons during the war alive in the peacetime army.”⁸⁵ Although this item was last in the order of priority in the list, it soon moved to the forefront.

NDHQ authorized the sub-unit with an effective date of 9 January 1948. Once this addition was announced, a dramatic change in focus became evident. Not only did its function as a base for expansion for the development of airborne units take precedence, but also the previously subtle reference to a war-fighting, specifically special forces role, leapt to the foreground. The new Terms of Reference for the employment of the Cdn SAS Coy, which was confirmed in April, outlined the following duties in a revised priority:

- a. Provide a tactical parachute company for airborne training. This company is to form the nucleus for expansion for the training of the three infantry battalions as parachute battalions;
- b. Provide a formed body of troops to participate in tactical exercises and demonstrations for courses at the CJATC and service units throughout the country;
- c. Preserve and advance the techniques of SAS [commando] operations developed during WW II 1939-1945;
- d. Provide when required parachutists to back-up the RCAF organizations as detailed in the Interim Plan for air Search and Rescue; and
- e. Aid Civil Authorities in fighting forest fires and assisting in national catastrophes when authorized by Defence Headquarters.⁸⁶

The shift was anything but subtle. The original emphasis on aid to the civil authority and public service type functions, duties that were attractive to a war-weary and fiscally-conscious Government, were now re-prioritized if not totally marginalized. It did, however, also represent the Army's initial reaction to the Government's announcement in 1946, that airborne training for the Active Force Brigade Group (regular army) was contemplated and that an establishment to this end was being created.

Artwork by Brenda Wight



“Canadian Special Air Service Company.”

The new organization was established at company strength – 125 personnel all ranks. It was comprised of one platoon from each of the three regular infantry regiments, the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), the Royal 22nd Regiment (R22eR) and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI). All members were volunteers, most with wartime airborne experience, who were carefully selected. They were all: bachelors, in superb physical condition, possessed initiative, self-reliance, self-discipline, mental agility and an original approach.

If there was any doubt of the intention of the unit, it was quickly dispelled when Captain Guy D'Artois, a wartime member of the FSSF, and later the SOE, was posted to the sub-unit as its second-in-command. However, due to a difficulty in finding a qualified major he became the acting officer commanding.⁸⁷ After all, his credentials were impeccable. D'Artois had dropped by parachute into Mont Cortevaix in France, then under German occupation, in April 1944. Prior to the sector being liberated, he had trained 600 partisans, established the Sylla underground, developed an 800 kilometre secure telephone line and attacked the occupying Germans troops on numerous occasions within his area of operation. Moreover, he instilled in his French allies a taste for victory. For his feats, D'Artois was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and the French *Croix de Guerre avec palme* from General Charles de Gaulle. His service with the underground earned him the praise: "Major D'Artois is the embodiment of nobility in figure, strength and stature but more importantly, nobility in simplicity and kindness."⁸⁸

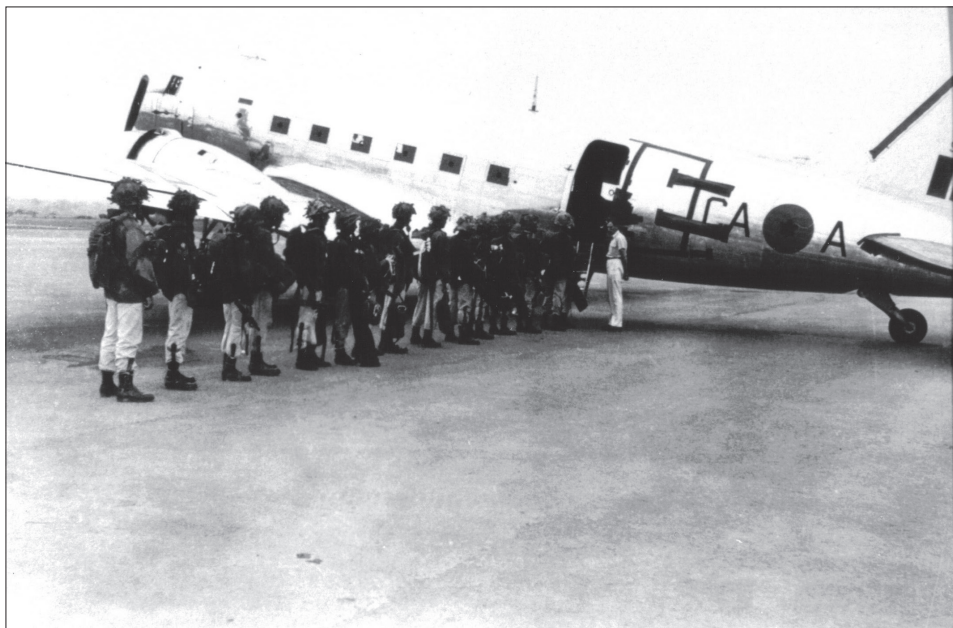
D'Artois brought his experience to the Cdn SAS Coy. He trained his sub-unit of carefully selected paratroopers as a specialized commando force. His intractable approach and trademark persistence quickly made him the "absolute despair of the Senior Officers at Rivers [CJATC]." Veterans of the SAS Company explained that "Captain D'Artois didn't understand 'no.' He carried on with his training regardless of what others said." Another veteran recalled that "Guy answered to no-one, he was his own man, who ran his own show."⁸⁹

This maverick approach did not fail to attract attention. In fact, as a result, the Director of Military Training in NDHQ demanded a reassessment of the Cdn SAS Coy. "I cannot," he argued, "agree with what appears to be the present concepts of the SAS Company." He identified the contradiction between the original intent and the actual practise, namely D'Artois' commandos. He added, "I feel first and foremost that its name should be changed...it is true that in war they [special forces type

units] do produce a result out of all proportion to their aims, if properly employed; but they do not win battles; they are a luxury and it is very much doubted if they, in their true sense, can be recruited from our peace time armed forces.”⁹⁰

But the issue was soon moot. To date, the continued survival of the JAS and its limited airborne and SOF capability, as represented by the Cdn SAS Coy, was largely due to a British and American preoccupation with airborne and air-transportable forces in the post-war period. This decision was based on a concept of security established on smaller standing forces with greater tactical and strategic mobility. In essence, possession of paratroopers represented the nation’s ready sword. This conclusion was critical in light of the looming 1946 Canada/U.S. Basic Security Plan (BSP) which imposed on Canada the requirement to provide one airborne/air-transportable brigade, and its necessary airlift, as its share of the overall continental defence agreement. By the summer of 1948, the SAS Company represented the total sum of Canada’s operational airborne and SOF capability. Clearly, some form of action was required.

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Cdn SAS Coy emplaning for a training jump.

As a result, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) directed that training for one battalion of infantry for airborne/air-transported operations be completed by 1 April 1949. After all, the BSP dictated that by 1 May 1949, the Canadian Government be capable of deploying a battalion combat team prepared to respond immediately to any actual Soviet lodgement in the Arctic, with a second battalion available within two months, and an entire brigade group within four months.⁹¹ This direction was the death knell for the Cdn SAS Coy.

The Canadian Army was now finally moving towards its airborne/airtransportable Active Brigade Group, which was titled the Mobile Striking Force (MSF). Its effect on the Cdn SAS Coy was devastating. The respective highly trained Cdn SAS Coy platoons provided the training staff for each of the Regular Force infantry regiments (i.e. RCR, R22eR, PPCLI) that rotated through the CJATC for parachute qualification, and upon completion returned to their parent regiments to provide an experienced airborne cadre for each of these regular force infantry regiments. The slow dissolution of the Cdn SAS Coy was formalized by the CGS when he announced that the sub-unit would not be reconstituted upon the completion of airborne conversion training by the R22eR, who represented the last unit of the three Active Force infantry regiments to undertake it.

The actual disbandment was so low key that no official date exists. Its personnel just melted away. Nonetheless, the Cdn SAS Coy served a critical function in Canadian airborne and SOF history. It was the “bridge” that linked 1 Cdn Para Bn and the three infantry battalions that conceptually formed an airborne brigade (i.e. the Mobile Striking Force (MSF)). In so doing, it propagated the airborne spirit and kept the requisite parachute skills alive. It also perpetuated, albeit briefly, the concept of a selected, highly trained commando force capable of special operations in keeping with the SOE and SAS traditions of WWII.

The Canadian Airborne Regiment

With the demise of the Cdn SAS Coy, the nation’s SOF lineage went into a hiatus. Neither the existence of the MSF or its successor the Defence of Canada Force represented any form of a special operations or SOF capability. For that matter, arguably, neither even provided a real airborne capability.

As always, external factors influenced internal organizational shifts. By the early-sixties the notion of an Army rapid reaction and Special Forces capability gathered

momentum, largely fuelled by the American involvement in the Vietnam War. In 1966, Lieutenant-General Jean Victor Allard, the new Commander of Force Mobile Command (FMC – i.e. Canadian Army) decided that the Canadian Army would develop a similar capability. Specifically, he aimed to have a completely airportable unit, with all its equipment, deployed and in the designated operational theatre as quickly as forty-eight hours. Therefore, on 12 May 1966, the MND announced, “FMC would include the establishment of an airborne regiment whose personnel and equipment could be rapidly sent to danger zones.”⁹²

For the Army Commander, the new airborne regiment represented flexibility and a higher order of professionalism and soldiering. The Army Commander clearly believed that “this light unit is going to be very attractive to a fellow who likes to live dangerously, so all volunteers can go into it.” His creation was to be open to all three services and manned exclusively by volunteers. “We intend,” he asserted, “to look at the individual a little more rather than considering the unit as a large body of troops, some of whom might not be suited for the task.”⁹³

In the Spring of 1966, General Allard, now the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), took the next step and discussed the formation of what he fondly labelled the new “airborne commando regiment.” Colonel Don H. Rochester was appointed as the commander-designate and he was given a further year to refine the “Concept of Operations,” organization, and structure. The prospects seemed unlimited. The “exciting thing about General Allard’s concept,” recalled Rochester, “was that this unit was to be radically different. Except for aircraft, it was to be self-contained with infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, signals and supporting administration.” Furthermore, he explained, “all were to be volunteers and so well trained in their own arm or service that they could devote their time to specialist training.”⁹⁴

The Canadian Airborne Regiment (Cdn AB Regt) was officially established on 8 April 1968.⁹⁵ It consisted of an airborne headquarters and signal squadron (80 personnel), two infantry airborne commandos (278 personnel each), an airborne field battery (80 personnel capable of providing two, three gun troops of pack howitzers, or two groups of six medium (82mm) mortars), an airborne field squadron (81 personnel), and an airborne service commando (i.e. combat service support and administration – 89 personnel).



3 Commando, Cdn AB Regt assaulting the Arnprior dam.

The Regiment's mandate was impressive if not overly optimistic. The Cdn AB Regt was required to be capable of performing a variety of tasks which included: the Defence of Canada; the UN 'stand-by' role; peacekeeping operations; missions in connection with national disaster; "Special Air Service" (SAS) type missions; coup de main tasks in a general war setting; and responsibility for parachute training in the CAF. The respective Canadian Forces Organizational Order (CFOO) stated, "the role of the Canadian Airborne Regiment is to provide a force capable of moving quickly to meet any unexpected enemy threat or other commitment of the Canadian Armed Forces."⁹⁶

In addition, the Army Commander, Lieutenant-General W.A.B. Anderson, ordered the Cdn AB Regt planning team to visit both the U.S. Special Forces Centre, as well as the British SAS Regiment to gather the "necessary stimulus and factual data upon which to develop your concept."⁹⁷ Moreover, he directed that an element of

the Regiment must be proficient at: HALO [High Altitude Low Opening] team parachute descents; deep penetration patrols; underwater diving; obstacle clearance and laying of underwater demolitions; mountain climbing; and “Special Service Forces” type team missions.⁹⁸

Although outwardly a conventional airborne regiment, by design it was clear that the Cdn AB Regt, both officially in accordance with its CFOO and through direction given by the CAF chain-of-command, was intended to be capable of special operations as understood at the time.⁹⁹ The emphasis on “SOF” like capability was also enshrined in the Operational Concept, as well as in the later doctrinal manual, *CFP 310 (1) Airborne – The Canadian Airborne Regiment*. Under the heading “Special Operations” a long list of tasks were included that were clearly Special Forces in nature. Specifically, the document stated that the “Canadian Airborne Regiment is to be prepared to carry out the following operations for which it is specially trained: disruption of lines of communications, destruction of critical installations; psychological warfare operations; special intelligence tasks; recovery tasks; deception operations; internal security operations; counter-guerilla operations; and support of indigenous paramilitary forces.”¹⁰⁰

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Cdn AB Regt Pathfinder HALO insertion.

The emphasis on special operations was not lost on the Cdn AB Regt's leadership, which focused at times almost exclusively on daring direct action commando like raids. Moreover, as a number of former commanding officers noted, if something happened (e.g. terrorist incident) they knew they would get the call so they attempted to train individuals in the necessary skills required for special operations.

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Cdn AB Regt Pathfinders deploying from a submarine.

The quality of the original individuals was incontestable. Official recruiting themes stressed the superior attributes of the new genre of warrior. They emphasised the fact that the new paratrooper had to be an excellent athlete, an expert at small arms and a survival specialist. Furthermore, they underscored the necessity to be robust, courageous and capable of a high level of endurance. Not surprisingly, the Cdn AB Regt received a larger percentage of the more ambitious, determined and energized individuals. They skimmed the cream of the Army. Only experienced officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers were accepted. All riflemen within the commandos were required to be qualified to the rank of corporal. This criteria meant that the respective individual had previously served within a regular rifle battalion. As a result, they were already competent and experienced in the basic

drills of soldiering. Equally important, they were on the whole older and normally, more mature. This selection allowed the Regiment to direct its training effort towards specialized training such as mountain and pathfinder operations, patrolling courses, skiing, and unarmed combat.

The Cdn AB Regt quickly forged a reputation for undertaking tough, demanding and dynamic activities. It set new standards for physical fitness and training realism. In consonance with its status as a strategic force capable of global deployment, the Regiment travelled throughout Canada, the United States, as well as exotic locations such as Jamaica, to practise its lethal craft. It conducted training and exchanges with the British SAS, American Rangers and Special Forces, and the French Foreign Legion. By the early-seventies the Airborne Regiment was at its zenith of power. It had the status of a mini-formation, direct access to the Commander of the Army, and an increased peacetime establishment of 1,044 all ranks.

The Cdn AB Regt deployed to Montreal, Quebec, during the FLQ Crisis in October 1970 and four years later was dispatched to Cyprus during the Turkish invasion of that island. However, in all cases the Regiment functioned solely as conventional infantry. On 26 November 1976, the Cdn AB Regt was moved from Edmonton to Petawawa and its formation status was stripped.¹⁰¹ It now became a simple unit within the newly re-roled Special Service Force (SSF), which provided the Army with a relatively light, airborne/airportable quick reaction force in the demographic centre of the country which could be moved quickly to augment either of the flanking brigades for internal security tasks, to the Arctic, or to United Nation (UN)-type operations.¹⁰²

The restructuring inflicted additional wounds. The Regiment was dramatically pared and it lost its preferred standing within the Army for both manning and exemptions from the mundane taskings that other units endured. Out of necessity it began to accept more junior members across the board (i.e. officers, senior NCOs and men) with the corollary degradation of capability. Moreover, it became increasingly under attack by senior CAF leaders who were not favourable to “special soldiers,” particularly during a period of constantly shrinking defence budgets.

Adding to the frustrations of the members of the Cdn AB Regt was the fact that despite the Regiment’s CFOO and international stand-by status it was never deployed. Senior CAF leadership argued that to deploy the Regiment would strip Canada of

it strategic reserve. More realistically, the problem centred around the make-up of the airborne unit itself. It lacked the necessary mobility (i.e. armoured and wheeled vehicles) as well support capability to deploy for extended periods of time. As a result, it was easier to send conventional units to do the operations, which were all conventional in nature anyways.

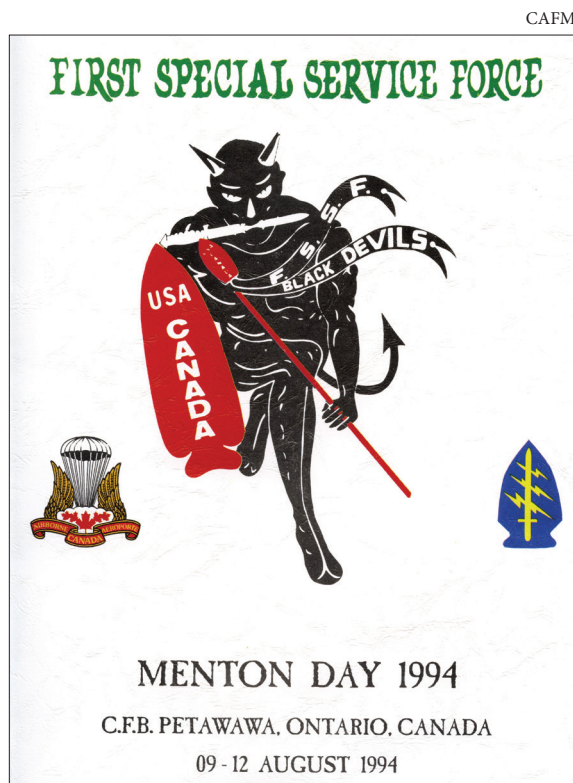
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Cdn AB Regt soldier searching for weapons in Somalia.

Continual downsizing of the Regiment to battalion status in 1992 further degraded both the status and capability of the Cdn AB Regt. Nonetheless, in December of that year, the Cdn AB Regt deployed to Somalia on a peace-making operation under Security Council Resolution 794. Unfortunately, the Cdn AB Regt experienced disciplinary problems in theatre that detracted from their actual performance.¹⁰³ The Regiment pacified its sector in less than three months, earning the praise of Hugh Tremblay, the Director of Humanitarian Relief and Rehabilitation in Somalia, who stated to all who would listen, “If you want to know and to see what you should do while you are here in Somalia go to Belet Huen, talk to the Canadians and do what they have done, emulate the Canadians and you will have success in your humanitarian relief sector.”¹⁰⁴

Nonetheless, the mission was ultimately redefined in the media and the public consciousness as a failure due to the poor leadership and criminal acts of a few. The inexplicable and lamentable torture killing of Shidane Arone, a Somali national caught stealing within the Regimental lines, became the defining image of the Cdn AB Regt's operation in Africa. The public outcry and criticism of the Department of National Defence (DND) as a result of the attempted cover-up at NDHQ and later revelations of hazing videos within the Cdn AB Regt created a crisis of epic proportions and senior political decision-makers desperately sought a quick and easy solution to their troubles. They swiftly found one. During an official press release on the afternoon of 23 January 1995, David Collenette, the MND, announced, "although our senior military officers believe the Regiment as constituted should continue, the government believes it cannot. Therefore, today under the authority of the National Defence Act, I have ordered the disbandment of the Canadian Airborne Regiment."¹⁰⁵



1994 Menton Day program.

In the end, the Cdn AB Regt represented Canada's only capability to conduct special operations from 1968 to 1993. A widespread feeling by former members of the Cdn AB Regt was captured by Brigadier-General Jim Cox. "In our hearts," he revealed, "we equated ourselves with the SAS and the SF [Special Forces] in the U.S."¹⁰⁶ In the end, although, especially towards the latter years of its existence, the Regiment did not share all the characteristics of a pure SOF organization, it did have both the official mandate and the implicit understanding of the senior Canadian Armed Forces leadership that it would be the entity that conducted special operations if required. Moreover, the Cdn AB Regt did practice Direct Action (DA) and Special Reconnaissance (SR) type tasks. In addition, it exercised regularly and conducted small-unit exchanges with SOF organizations in the United States and Britain. As such, it fills an important position in Canada's special operations and SOF history.

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Cdn AB Regt soldiers working with USSF in a joint exercise.

CHAPTER 4

THE RISE OF TERRORISM: THE POST-COLD WAR EXPERIENCE

The destruction of the Berlin Wall in late November 1989, which is considered symbolic of the end of the Cold War, generated widespread political and public belief that the world was actually now a safer, more stable place. After all, the roughly forty-plus-year Cold War was over. More importantly, the West won. As such, Western governments and the public expected a peace dividend. Indeed, with the Soviet threat eliminated, Canadians began to ask why it was necessary to maintain large military forces? Moreover, the Canadian government was facing a colossal deficit that was dragging down the national economy, devaluing the Canadian dollar and scaring off foreign investment. DND, with the largest discretionary budget of any Federal department, became a natural target.

The new world order, however, quickly began to unravel. Former proxy states that had been bolstered economically, politically and militarily were now left to their own devices without the necessary economic subsidies to survive, or the security infrastructure to hold together fragmented ethnic and culturally-diverse populations. Not surprisingly, they spiraled into chaos. Failed and at-risk states mushroomed. In their wake civil war, ethnic cleansing and genocide erupted on the global scene. Rather than a peace dividend, reality required a massive injection of resources to stabilize the spiral into chaos that the post-Cold War environment required. The Canadian Government now had to ensure it developed the necessary national security posture to secure the country in this new turbulent era.

Special Emergency Response Team (SERT)

Importantly, even before the chaos that transpired after the end of the Cold War, Western Industrialized countries had already faced a fundamental shift in the threat picture to international security that occurred in the late 1960s. Political violence, or more accurately terrorism, became recognized as a significant “new” menace. Bombings, kidnapping, murders, and the hijacking of commercial aircraft

seemingly exploded onto the world scene. Not only in the Middle East, but also in Europe, countries were thrust into a state of violence as both home-grown and international terrorists waged a relentless war that recognized no borders or limits. The murder of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, West Germany became one of the defining images of the crisis, as did the 1975 terrorist assault on the headquarters of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, Austria.¹⁰⁷

But the problem went beyond a spill-over of Middle-Eastern conflict and politics. In Germany, groups such as the Baader-Meinhof Gang (or Red Army Faction), created death and destruction. Holland was besieged by Moluccan terrorists and Britain struggled with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Northern Ireland question. Even in North America, terrorism raised its ugly head. The Americans saw the growth of radical groups such as the Weathermen, New World Liberation Front and Black Panther Party, to name but a few. Not surprisingly, these crises prompted most industrialized nations throughout the globe to adopt new measures, specifically specially selected and trained military and para-military units to fight international terrorism.

In Canada, the situation was similar. Almost 500 political terrorist events occurred in Canada between 1960 and 1985. Eighty-five percent of the events were domestically based and fifteen percent occurred internationally.¹⁰⁸ The early acts of terrorism were perpetuated by the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors (this peaked in 1961) and then the Quebec separatist-related terrorism of *Le Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ), which led to the October Crisis of 1970.

Interestingly, despite the awareness of the terrorist threat and nexus in Canada, the Canadian Government was unsure of how to move forward. An important push for action was the successful assault of a hijacked aircraft and the release of hostages in Mogadishu, Somalia on 18 October 1977 by the West German *Grenzschutzgruppe 9* (GSG 9). As a result, in November 1977, the Cabinet, based on concerns from the Solicitor General (SOLGEN), considered the nation's preparedness in the face of increasing international terrorism and ordered the creation of an ad hoc committee with representation from DND, the Privy Council Office (PCO), the Department of External Affairs, Transport Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to provide a proposal to Cabinet on the type of counter-terrorist capability that Canada required to perform a similar function.

The Committee quickly revealed that there were no police or military units in Canada that possessed a viable capability to respond to incidents perpetrated by determined, dedicated political terrorists. Moreover, following visits to the United Kingdom (UK) and West Germany, the Committee concluded that a sophisticated, dedicated national anti-terrorist capability was required, if for no other reason than its deterrent value.

As a result, the Cabinet appointed the Solicitor General as lead department to develop the capability. In 1978, following several international incidents, the SOLGEN and the MND submitted another joint submission to the Cabinet calling for a Hostage Assault and Rescue Program (HARP). Although Cabinet accepted the HARP proposal in principle it was later rejected by the Treasury Board for financial reasons.

However, the threat was still exigent and the SOLGEN was concerned about the G7 Ottawa Summit Conference to be held 20-21 July 1981. DND brushed-off the Solicitor General's request to raise and train a specialized 100-man force. DND argued that it would take a minimum of twelve to eighteen months, therefore, they insisted there was insufficient time for them to establish the necessary unit. Subsequently, the SOLGEN ordered the RCMP to identify the best members from its special weapons and tactics teams from across the country and to form a HARP team. The selected team was trained at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Petawawa with the assistance of the British Special Air Service and DND support. Late in June, 28 RCMP assaulters graduated from the program.

A second iteration of the HARP proposal was subsequently raised. However, DND, who had actually been a reluctant partner from the beginning, now stalled on committing to the program, even going so far as to question whether or not a counter-terrorist force was actually needed. For the SOLGEN, the need was crystal clear. His view was spurred on by a rash of terrorist incidents in Canada. In 1982, terrorist bombings in western and central Canada by a group known as Direct Action generated serious concern. In addition, on 12 April 1982, three members of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) shot the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires Kani Cungor several times in the underground parking lot of his East Ottawa apartment building. Then, several months later on 28 August 1982, the Turkish Military Attaché, Colonel Attila Altikat was shot nine times in the head at close range during morning rush-hour at the intersection of Western Parkway and Island Park Drive in Ottawa.

The situation seemed to go from bad to worse. On 2 October 1982, five Canadians, who were recently trained by the Red Army Faction terrorist organization detonated approximately 121 kilograms of dynamite outside the Litton Industries plant in Toronto. The Direct Action Organization, a splinter group of the Baader-Meinhof Gang claimed responsibility for the attack.

Several years later, in 1984, the RCMP began to warn of the potential serious threat of Sikh violence. New extremist groups such as the Sikh youth group International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) and the Dashmesh Regiment were allegedly compiling a “hit list” of targets. Other foreign inspired terrorist threats also continued. On 12 March 1985, three Armenian men from the Armenian Revolutionary Army, a splinter group of the ASALA, attacked the Turkish Embassy in Ottawa, killing a Pinkerton security guard in the initial assault. They held seven hostages for approximately three and one-half hours. Additionally, on 1 April 1985, the Toronto public transit system was virtually paralyzed after the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of our Homeland sent a communiqué threatening the death of passengers of the transit system. The threat cost the city two million dollars and untold overtime hours for the Metropolitan Police, the Ontario Provincial Police and the RCMP.¹⁰⁹

The continuing trend of terrorism both internationally and domestically prompted another attempt at moving the national counter-terrorist agenda. On 28 May 1985, the Solicitor General submitted another proposal to Cabinet. His greatest problem, however, was determining who would be responsible for the new capability. Neither the RCMP or DND actually wanted it. The RCMP argued that the counter-terrorism/hostage rescue was counter to police culture since entailed the use of deliberate and at times exceptional force that would likely cause death. This conflicted with the fact that police action is grounded on the principle of restraint, particularly in armed confrontations, since the over-riding objective was to preserve life. The RCMP Commissioner also argued that the RCMP did not have the personnel-pool from which to draw the required manpower.

The military’s reluctance to take on the task became clear during a meeting between the SOLGEN, the commissioner of the RCMP and the CDS. The CDS at the time was of the mind that the type of individual created in such an organization was such that once they were done their tour of service they would leave the unit and invariably become gangsters or mercenaries who were now highly trained. As such,

the CDS did not want that type of problem or fall-out and as a result did not want that type of unit within his Canadian Armed Forces.¹¹⁰

The SOLGEN was in a difficult position. Neither of the heads of the RCMP or CAF were willing to take on the responsibility of a counter-terrorist unit. Any lethargy that remained in deciding on whether or not to pursue a counter-terrorist capability was shattered a few months after the SOLGEN tabled his latest proposal. Significantly, on 23 June 1985, as baggage crew was transferring luggage from Canadian Pacific flight 003 from Vancouver to an Air India flight at the Narita Airport in Japan, a suitcase exploded killing two and wounding four others. An hour later, Air India Flight 182, from Montreal to London exploded over the coast of Ireland. The explosions claimed 331 lives and, at the time, represented the worst terrorist attacks in modern history.¹¹¹

This latest attack galvanized Cabinet. It directed that the RCMP create a Special Emergency Response Team (SERT), which was established on 22 January 1986. Perrin Beatty, the SOLGEN at the time, announced, “In those rare cases where all efforts to negotiate a peaceful end to a hostage seizure have failed and where the hostages are in immediate danger, the authorities have no choice but rescue by armed assault.”¹¹² The “razor-sharp” antiterrorist unit was described by Beatty as “a weapon of last resort, brought in at the last moment when all else fails.”¹¹³

SERT consisted of two dedicated assault units of 23 personnel, as well as specialists, a small command cell and administrative staff. The total strength was approximately 75 individuals. The original scheme that Cabinet approved specified that one of the two “assault” units would normally be dispersed on routine police duties, however, this arrangement soon proved to be impractical. Importantly, the RCMP SERT was a high readiness force that was not intended as a “quick reaction force.” Rather its role was intended for commitment on Prime Ministerial authority only after a standoff had developed, all attempts at negotiation had failed, and resolution of the issue by force was beyond the capabilities of municipal, provincial or other federal resources deployed. As such, SERT had a very narrow mandate to “affect a hostage rescue by assault using deadly force.”¹¹⁴

By 1987, clear command and control (C2) principles were set in place. The SOLGEN confirmed SERT’s role and mission:

It is a single purpose, highly specialized formation employing shock and precise deadly fire at close quarters to neutralize hostage takers before they are able to execute their captives. The Team should therefore be committed only after all other means have been exhausted and when it is clear that nothing less will give reasonable assurance of the hostages' rescue.¹¹⁵

Significantly, the Cabinet approved C2 principles allowed the SOLGEN to authorize deployment and commitment of SERT following consultation with the Prime Minister and other concerned ministers. The C2 principles also provided for "precautionary deployment" of SERT following consultation with the Prime Minister and other concerned ministers in instances of a major domestic or international event. For example, one of the two SERT sub-units was deployed as a precaution to the 1987 Vancouver Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, to the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics and to the 1988 Toronto Economic Summit.

DND did not escape its responsibility to support SERT. In August 1987, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between CAF and the RCMP was arranged that outlined specific air transport support (both rotary and fixed wing) CAF would provide SERT for operational and training purposes.

Throughout this period, the requirement to grow a third SERT sub-unit to augment the current two, twenty-three man assault groups remained a major concern. International experience had shown that SERT's present size was inadequate for the potentially critical mission of assaulting a wide-bodied aircraft. In February 1992, the SOLGEN finally directed the RCMP to recruit the necessary personnel to man a third assault group. However, the direction would prove to be superfluous. The face of counter-terrorism was about to change.

Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2)

As noted earlier, by the early 1990s, the continuing efforts of the Federal government to combat its enormous deficit led to deep budget cuts to all government departments.¹¹⁶ The RCMP was not immune. Faced with financial constraints, the requirement to pay over-time to members of the SERT, a force that had been in existence for years but had not yet deployed, as well as the requirement to continually rely on military airlift and other support provided the impetus for change. Moreover, the military in the Post-Cold War era was also amenable to taking on new roles.¹¹⁷ The Deputy Minister at the time, Bob Fowler, was instrumental in

pushing for DND to take on the role. As such, in February 1992, senior government, RCMP and DND decision-makers decided to transfer the Hostage Rescue (HR)/Counter-Terrorism (CT) responsibilities from the RCMP SERT to a military organization. Consequently, Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2) was born.

The transfer was broken into two distinct phases. The first, which spanned 1 March 1992 to June 1993, focused on DND/CAF conducting the following activities:

- a. defining policy changes that would be required;
- b. designing and establishing the JTF 2 organization and confirming its mission;
- c. defining the headquarters element and instructors (Annual Posting Season (APS) 92);
- d. identifying and procuring training and operational equipment;
- e. identifying and procuring administrative equipment (e.g. vehicles, clerical, computers etc);
- f. designing the selection criteria for team members and selecting them; and
- g. defining administrative and training facility requirements for both Dwyer Hill and Petawawa.

The second phase consisted of the actual posting of assault team members to the new JTF 2 organization; conducting individual and team training; as well as assuming operational responsibility from the RCMP as of 1 April 1993.

Due to the fiscal constraints, the Treasury Board (TB) insisted that the transfer would have zero impact to the Federal budget. Initially, DND had no desire to take over the 210 acre RCMP Dwyer Hill complex. Rather, they planned to establish the new unit in CFB Petawawa. However, once the planners gained a better understanding of the special facilities required; learned that the RCMP were considering closing down Dwyer Hill; and examined the infrastructure requirements of the unit compared to existing CAF facilities in the Ottawa area, they realized that Dwyer Hill Training Centre was the better option.

The official role the Government assigned to JTF 2 was “to provide a force capable of rendering armed assistance in the resolution of an incident that is, or has the potential of, affecting the national interest. The primary focus is counter-terrorism; however, the unit can expect to be employed on other high value strategic tasks.”¹¹⁸

The challenge for the unit was immense. It had to select and train its personnel, and establish a new unit and be operational by 1 April 1993. The tight timelines meant that the first CO, Lieutenant-Colonel Ray Romses, had little choice but to utilize the RCMP SERT model for pre-selection, selection and qualification standards. The RCMP had two distinct entities. The Dwyer Hill Training Centre was run by a RCMP inspector who was responsible for the infrastructure and training. The command and control of the actual SERT was vested in another RCMP officer. Romses, however, would be responsible for both the operational and training functions.

The RCMP, with the participation of seven CAF individuals who were selected by career managers to act as training cadre, ran special selection courses up to August 1992. Subsequently, the RCMP and the CAF training cadre ran two assaulter courses for successful candidates from September to December 1992.¹¹⁹ This course was followed up from January to March 1993, with final operational training and a sniper course. In addition, a second assault troop course was also conducted from January to March. Increasingly, the RCMP SERT members took on less and less responsibility for the training as the JTF 2 personnel were trained. In the end, by 1 April 1993, JTF 2 had two assault troops and a sniper detachment operationally ready.

Despite the tight timelines, JTF 2 was ready for the 1 April stand-up date. A formal hand-over parade and Mess Dinner were held at Dwyer Hill on 31 March 1992 to mark the handover of the HR/CT role from the RCMP SERT to JTF 2. The following day, the unit was already undertaking an operational task.

Another challenge faced by the embryonic new CT unit was the prevailing environment. The Somalia Scandal, specifically the torture killing of Shidane Arone by members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment while deployed on Operation Deliverance in Somalia, and the subsequent political maelstrom, placed the new unit in a very difficult spot. Lieutenant-General Mike Day, the unit's first adjutant, observed:

The CAF was very much living in a post Somalia effected environment. Although the decision had not yet been made, at this stage, to disband the [Canadian Airborne] Regiment, the full internal impact on culture and the leadership of the CAF, was already beginning to be felt across the force. The CAF Senior leadership, although acquiescing to the initiative by then Mr. Bob Fowler to assume the counter terrorist role, they were by no means keen advocates. Already scared and scarred by the Somalia

experience, which was in the throes of tarnishing the Canadian Forces, the last thing they wanted was what they considered another Airborne Regiment like entity. An elite fighting force clearly was too close to comfort for many, and although ignorance about what the unit should, and ultimately would be, played a part in shaping these opinions. It was arguably the predilection to risk avoidance that was the most telling element.¹²⁰

CANSOFCOM



Early days – JTF 2 assaulters conducting break-in drills.

Similarly, a former senior public affairs officer revealed, “The early days of JTF 2 were a different era. The first JTF 2 press plan basically stated, ‘show nothing; say nothing; admit nothing.’” He acknowledged the environment was one “where you could be organizational healthy one moment and in crisis the next. Reputations could be destroyed in minutes.” Importantly, for JTF 2, the message out of the gate was “[your] Reputation hangs on a razor’s edge.”¹²¹ As one operator asserted, “Understanding we were a new entity, we knew we were one decision away from being disbanded.”¹²²

In essence, a very suspicious senior leadership was concerned that the new unit, which was made up heavily of former serving members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment not take on any outward vestiges of elitism. They made it clear that the JTF 2 lexicon was not to include words such as elite, special, Special Forces, Special Operations Forces or any other words or symbols that would perpetuate or link to the entity or concept of a military elite. As one former CO revealed, “The term SOF wasn’t even allowed to be used – we had to use Special Purpose Forces – the lexicon of NDHQ.”¹²³

Aside from the already stated challenges, and the constricting “political” environment, from the beginning, the CO realized that the unit would have to evolve. The RCMP SERT had been content to remain strictly a police HR/CT (black) type organization. Initial time constraints meant that JTF 2 had to take on that paradigm and the police culture that accompanied it. However, with the black role came the issue of utility. How often would it be used? Romses realized this could also create retention issues. Moreover, for JTF 2 to provide relevance to the greater CAF, a green (SOF) role would need to be developed.

One senior JTF 2 operator recalled, “We started to slide into a Green role. It was a natural push from our unit as most of the guys were from the Airborne Regiment.” He added, “for the Commonwealth Games we had to run a basic course on patrolling. Furthermore, deployments to the Former Yugoslavia and Africa to do Contingency Planning Assistance Teams (CPAT), Contingent Commander’s Advisory Teams (CCAT), Close Personal Protection (CPP) and hostage rescue, also drove us to green.”¹²⁴

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JTF 2 assaulters conducting a HR.

As such, the unit began to evolve in the mid to late-1990s towards a more military SOF orientation and capability. However, HR/CT remained JTF 2's primary focus. In 1994, the CDS approved growth for JTF 2, as well as a transition from a pure black CT role to other special operations tasks. As a result, the unit undertook tasks around the globe that gave its members both experience in foreign locations (e.g. Africa, the Balkans, Haiti), as well as exposure to senior military and civilian decision-makers.

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JTF 2 CPP in Haiti.

The unit's culture at the time was one of innovation, dedication and professionalism. There was no real fore-runner or experience to fall back on. Much of what the unit was doing was by trial and error. One of the original "plank-holders" recalled:

We were striving for excellence. There was far less concern about personal or family – it was all about the mission. It was all about getting the job done. Innovation was everything. In Elliot Mines we practiced with explosives, often collapsing rooms on ourselves. It was all trial and error to build the packages we have today. There were no DRDC [Defence Research Development Canada] scientists. MCT [Maritime Counter Terrorism] – we were out there with no dry suits or maritime radios in the mid-Atlantic Ocean. Only know what you know. Different climate. No drinking. Six to nine months on IR [Immediate Response] squadron. There was a recall at least once a month. One week a month dedicated to night training. We operated in our bubble. Our challenge – establishing credibility and trust with the government.¹²⁵

Undeniably, the unit's organizational culture was strong.¹²⁶ It was built on shared hardship, experience and a like-mindedness to succeed. Importantly, the small unit consisted of individuals that self-identified as possessing an abnormally high measure of the following traits:

- a. A high sense of mission;
- b. A sense of individual responsibility and accountability;
- c. A sense of commitment well beyond that expected in other units;
- d. Personal motivation and initiative well outside the norm;
- e. High standards of physical fitness and mental robustness;
- f. Versatility and adaptability in skills and techniques unique to the CT role;
- g. Members must be capable of working either as a team member or in isolation without supervision, and must be equally as able to work alongside non-military organizations and foreign units; and
- h. Maturity and common sense.

Although the unit was expanding to include a green component, as already mentioned, its focus was still almost exclusively on black skills. Nonetheless, in 1995, the unit established a "green phase" for new members during their initial training

course. This phase was largely an introduction to fieldcraft for the non-combat arms volunteers.

The slow expansion to “green skills,” however, was not without consequence. Within the unit there was a growing tension between those who favoured retaining the exclusive black hostage rescue role and “police culture” and those who wanted to push JTF 2 to be more akin to a military organization such as the British SAS and U.S. Delta Force. As one former JTF 2 Regimental Sergeant-Major (RSM) shared, “In the nineties we began to shift to field work as a Tier 1 SOF organization. It was a shock for some. They got use to the easy living [that was part of the black/police HR/CT culture].”¹²⁷ Similarly, a junior officer at the time observed:

There were potential friction points as we transitioned to a “green” role for Afghanistan. The unit was borne from the RCMP’s Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) and the “spill-over” of the police tactical culture inevitably permeated into our squadrons. People had grown comfortable in the realm of CT Operations with its inherent blacked out Suburban [vehicles], hotels and lots of TD [temporary duty allowance]. Now it was heavy rucksacks, rations and patrolling in rugged extreme conditions. It created problems and some conflicts in leadership.¹²⁸

The shift, or more accurately expansion of focus, and its corollary impact was part of a 1999 Chief of Review Services report. It captured the essence of a number of issues that faced JTF 2 at the time. The report stated:

JTF 2 is fully capable of meeting its assigned mission and task...The unassuming nature and competence of its members has earned the respect and admiration of Canada’s law enforcement agencies. Of even greater tribute, JTF 2 has also gained hard-earned recognition from many of our allies Special Operations Forces...The evolution of the unit over the past two years has been dramatic. While they inherited RCMP Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) character and methods of operations had served the squadron-sized JTF 2 well in the early days, the growth resulting from the assumption of unique military tasks required the unit to progress beyond the initial phase. The degree of this change has posed important leadership challenges...There is real danger of unit stagnation resulting from only undertaking training solely to prepare for the occurrence of a terrorist incident.¹²⁹

In the end, the internal debate was finally extinguished as external events provided the catalyst for dramatic change. On the morning of 11 September 2001 (9/11), millions watched their television screens mesmerized as events unfolded in New York City. In the early morning hours a passenger jet had ploughed into the top stories of the World Trade Center (WTC) in the financial core of the city. As audiences around the globe were glued to their television sets trying to absorb what had just happened, a second large commercial airliner came into view and slammed into the twin tower of the WTC. It would only be a short time later that both towers collapsed onto themselves and crumpled to the ground killing all those inside. A third aircraft slammed into the Pentagon, killing and injuring hundreds more and a fourth hijacked jetliner heading for Washington D.C. slammed into the ground in Pennsylvania short of its objective due to the bravery of its passengers. In total, almost 3,000 people were killed in the attacks.

Within days it became clear that the Americans would take military action to strike at the terrorist who planned and conducted the attack and those that supported and abetted them. Osama Bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorist (AQ) organization sheltered in Afghanistan by Mullah Omar and his Taliban government quickly became the centre of attention. Not surprisingly, the Americans, through Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) para-military forces and U.S. SOF, in conjunction with the Northern Alliance, an anti-Taliban resistance movement, quickly launched an offensive to oust the Taliban and capture Bin Laden and his associates.

For Colonel Clyde Russell, the CO of JTF 2 at the time, the crisis proved to be a catalyst for change. “I realized we needed an operational focus quickly or we would fail Canadians,” Russell disclosed. “9/11 and the war pushed us to next level and beyond,” he revealed, “Instinctively I knew this was an opportunity and I knew we had to get ready for it.”¹³⁰

The Canadians quickly moved to support their American allies. The CAF mobilized to send ships, aircraft and ground forces in support of the U.S. mission titled Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Part of the CAF force package was a special operations task force (SOTF) that deployed as part of OEF and was under operational control of the American Commander of the Combined Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command. The Americans broke up the Afghan theatre into two distinct areas of operational responsibility – Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (North) (CJSOTF (N))/Task Force Dagger and Combined

Joint Special Operations Task Force (South) (CJSOTF (S))/Task Force K-Bar, which the Americans designated as the Coalition SOF task force.¹³¹ Their tasks included direct action, special reconnaissance and sensitive site exploitation.¹³²

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Mountain Observation Post – Afghanistan 2002.

According to one ground force commander, the operations conducted by the SOTF were “akin to swinging a sledge hammer.” He explained, “Wherever we swung it, the enemy would scatter and seldom put up a fight. The firepower and resources brought to bear in our common mission force packages was staggering.” The standard package included at least one, sometimes two, AC-130 gunships, as well as MH-47s and MH-60 helicopters flown by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), as well as P3 Orion intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR) platforms. The ground force commander conceded, “We were spoiled with our unchallenged access to the combat enablers and short mission durations.”¹³³ Importantly, with the exception of the AC-130 crews, everyone was co-located so mission planning was greatly facilitated.

The JTF 2 based SOTF was deployed in theatre from December 2001 to November 2002. At the time, JTF 2 was largely an unknown quantity and their role in theatre was initially marginalized. “They were curious because they [Americans] didn’t really know us,” conceded one member of the Task Force. He explained, “At the beginning, people said, ‘Who the f--- is JTF2?’”¹³⁴

It took only one mission, in the end, to demonstrate their skill sets and very quickly they became a force of choice. By the end of the tour, according to U.S. military officials the JTF 2 SOTF had conducted “42 reconnaissance and surveillance missions as well as 23 direct action missions.”¹³⁵ Tasks included “snatching senior Taliban officials,” manning high altitude observation posts and combing mountain cave complexes.¹³⁶ Their performance earned them the trust and respect of the U.S. commanders in theatre and the SOTF was given special tasks with American sub-units allocated to it under tactical control (normally Rangers from the 75th Ranger Regiment or paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division, as well as aviation assets). Notably, the JTF 2 SOTF executed more missions than any other coalition SOF force assigned to CJSOTF (S)/Task Force K-Bar.

CANSOFCOM



Extraction from an operation.

In fact, U.S. Navy Commander Kerry Metz, director of operations for CJSOTF-S told Congress, “We were fortunate to have the finest special operations forces ... and we challenged our operators to conduct missions in some of the most hostile

environments ever operated in.” He explained, “we had special reconnaissance teams operating in the mountains of Afghanistan above 10,000 feet for extended periods without resupply.”¹³⁷ The CJSOTF-S Commander, Rear-Admiral Bob Harward, simply acknowledged “that his JTF 2 team was his first choice for any ‘direct action’ mission.”¹³⁸

Unquestionably, JTF 2 participation in OEF was a critical turning point in its evolution and CANSOF history. Vice-Admiral Greg Maddison,¹³⁹ the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) at the time assessed:

The immediate question was what options can we put on the table? The British literally had 30-40 people in Tampa [CENTCOM headquarters] within hours. We had to wait until the Government announced we were assisting/taking part of coalition of the willing. Once we got that it led to discussions with the Americans. It was a combination of “What do you need?” “What are you thinking?” and what do we have ready. We tried to get mutual agreement with what they were willing to accept. They definitely wanted us to respond with as significant a package as we could. We pitched the Chief of Staff several options, specifically an unconventional response, namely a contingent of JTF 2. The CDS recognized this as a realistic option. However, we did not think the GoC [Government of Canada] would accept it as an option. The response was quick – Yes! We were surprised they said yes. We explained JTF 2 capabilities at length. The prime minister and Cabinet stated that it made sense to them. For command and control, because of the quick response times required for targeting, the responsibility was put on a three-star in NDHQ, specifically the DCDS. In time we saw the SOF commander going through the normal conventional theatre chain-of-command. However, at the beginning we had the mantle of top cover and oversight. JTF 2 was sent out first time into a theatre of war. Failure was not an option. If the task force failed, we would never get another opportunity again. Quite simply the GoC would not support another deployment. Because of Somalia we couldn’t fail, neither SOF, nor conventional forces. It would have been the death knell for public support or government support. We had to be very careful not to make tactical mistakes that would have strategic impact and stop our ability to move forward. We ensured all the “i”s were dotted and “t”s were crossed.¹⁴⁰

Furthermore, Maddison laid out the benefits that accrued from the SOF deployment:

1. Tactical impact – conducted some operations that saved lives;
2. At the operational and strategic level SOF proved to be another tool in the tool box;
3. The SOTF garnered so much international credibility and trust that in years to come we had to fight off offers to work with others here, there, and everywhere;
4. Gave us impetus to have appropriate support/discussions to have Hillier later successfully argue for a SOF command; and
5. Actually proved to folks themselves they could do the things we trained them to do – basic foundation was proven – no small achievement in confidence of operations.¹⁴¹

The value of the JTF 2 contribution, or more importantly, its impact in theatre clearly bolstered Canadian credibility. “We had to shoulder our way into the international SOF community with rep[resentative]s from the British SAS and U.S. Delta,” Colonel Russell explained, “but once we got our seat at the table, now we can hold our own.”¹⁴²

Participation in OEF also finalized the debate back at the Dwyer Hill Training Centre in Ottawa. One JTF 2 detachment commander asserted, “9/11 put us full throttle into the warfighting game and allowed us to pass a number of hurdles that would have taken years in a peacetime environment.” Lieutenant-General Day, one of the SOTF commanders at the time and later a Commander of the Canadian Special Operations Command (CANSOFCOM) believed, “We progressed the unit in maturity decades that first year [in Afghanistan].” He explained, “9/11 and Afghanistan allowed CANSOFCOM to grow into a mature combat capable force. Our first deployment will remain the defining moment of who we are.”¹⁴³

Quite simply, the deployment of the JTF 2 SOTF planted the seeds of CANSOF growth and maturation. “It allowed us to move into a kinetic mode,” affirmed Day, “it showed the connection of the counter-terrorism/hostage rescue piece to the expeditionary capability.”¹⁴⁴

CANSOFCOM



Extraction from an operation.

Colonel Russel expounded, “Stepping out onto the world stage was our first big show.” He added, “from a strategic perspective, it opened the eyes of the grown-ups of how SOF can be used as a bit of a strategic place marker in a crisis.” Russell explained, “we had a small footprint but a large impact. The country got a lot of credit. In the end, the deployment not only revitalized the unit, but it also revealed a very potent international capability.”¹⁴⁵

The self-assessment of CANSOF’s contribution to Operation Enduring Freedom was later reinforced by the Americans. On 7 December 2004, George Bush, the President of the United States, awarded the JTF 2 component of CJSOTF(S)/Task Force K-Bar a Secretary of the Navy, Presidential Unit Citation. American officials sent the request for Canadian approval prior to its actual presentation to the CAF members. DND issued a press release the following day to announce the presentation. The Canadian Governor General congratulated JTF 2 on the award on 10 December 2004 through a media advisory. The narrative of the citation read:

For extraordinary heroism and outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy in Afghanistan from 17 October 2001 to 30 March 2002. Throughout this period, Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – SOUTH/Task Force K-BAR, operating first from Oman and then from forward locations throughout the southern and eastern regions of

Afghanistan successfully executed its primary mission to conduct special operations in support of the U.S. efforts as delegated to Commander U.S. CENTCOM through the Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command (JFSOCC) to destroy, degrade and neutralize the TB [Taliban] and AQ leadership and military. During its six-month existence TF K-Bar was the driving force behind myriad combat missions conducted in Combined Joint Operation Area Afghanistan. These precedent setting and extremely high-risk missions included search and rescue, recovery die ops, non-compliant boarding of high interest vessels, special reconnaissance, hydrographic reconnaissance, SSE [Sensitive Site Exploitation], DA missions apprehension of military and political detainees, destruction of multiple cave and tunnel complexes, identification and destruction of several known AQ training camps, explosion of thousands of pounds of enemy ordnance and successful coordination of UW [unconventional warfare] operations for Afghanistan. The sailors, soldiers, Airmen, Marines and coalition partners of CJSOTF (S)/TF K-Bar set an unprecedented 100 percent mission success rate across a broad spectrum of special operations missions while operating under extremely difficult and constantly dangerous conditions. They established benchmark standards of professionalism, tenacity, courage tactical brilliance and operational excellence while demonstrating superb esprit de corps and maintaining the highest measures of combat readiness.¹⁴⁶

In the aftermath of the award, the Canadian leadership took the opportunity to heap praise on the shadow warriors. "This citation from the U.S.," Bill Graham, the MND, announced "signifies the outstanding counter-terrorism and special operations capability that has been developed by the Canadian Forces." He added, "JTF 2 has played a critical role in Canada's contribution to the war against terrorism and will continue to be an important part of our domestic security."¹⁴⁷

Similarly, General Ray Hennault, the CDS at the time, asserted, "The presentation of the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation to members of JTF 2 brings important recognition to a group of incredible CF members whose accomplishments normally cannot be publicly recognized in the interest of national security." He concluded, "Canadians should be very proud of this specialized Canadian military unit."¹⁴⁸

The importance of the mission and the recognition of the CANSOF contribution were also evident in the governmental decision to increase the capability and double

the size of JTF 2. The MND quickly realized the strategic impact, at a relatively low cost, that even a small SOF task force could achieve. As such, he pushed for expansion.¹⁴⁹

In his speech to the House of Commons on 10 December 2001, to release the 2001 Federal Budget, *Enhancing Security for Canadians*, Liberal Finance Minister Paul Martin declared, “In light of the international obligations that may be placed on the JTF 2 as part of Canada’s commitment to its allies in the war on terrorism, this budget provides \$119 million over the next five years to double the capacity of the unit. This will improve the JTF 2’s ability to respond to incidents at home and abroad.”¹⁵⁰

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CANSOF mobility patrol with close air support from an AH-64 Apache

Despite the great effort and incredible results, the JTF 2 initial deployment to Afghanistan ended rather quickly. By late 2002, with the Taliban largely routed and the country entering what appeared to be a period of relative calm, Canada withdrew all of its forces from Afghanistan. For JTF 2, the redeployment home was

necessary. The current level of activities for the relatively small unit could not be sustained. Colonel Russel conceded,

As CO I had a lot of balls in the air. The Government wanted expansion of JTF 2 and wanted it now. I was fighting back to maintain standards. We still had to defend the homeland. At the same time we had to expend a lot of focus to fight the war and develop a credible Task Force. After 9/11 we moved / rolled into a mission command environment with lots of risk acceptance. We had to provide the freedom of action to produce what SOF was capable of doing. By 2005, we had established a good deal of credibility. Mission success breeds expectations. Failure was never an option. I stressed this to all my subordinate commanders. Up to the deployment on OEF we were only a domestic HR force. We did a few international operations but not combat operations. We had to retool. We revamped all ours courses, selection, operations and leadership training. We knew that we were in for the long war. Not sure how many hits we would take. SOF needs to maintain relevance. If not people will question their investment. Within months after 9/11 we became involved in a \$125M project. Doubling capability – careful with words – not double personnel because we vowed to maintain our standards, therefore, double capability. The risk of letting someone through our selection and training processes with lesser standards would compromise the unit. That was a risk we couldn't accept. It was a full time job balancing expansion, domestic requirement (e.g. G7) and our deployment on OEF.¹⁵¹

The CO's challenge was clearly evident in his intent statement to the unit. Russel wrote:

The unit must simultaneously accomplish three major tasks in FY [Fiscal Year] 02/03. Our first priority is to maintain a strong domestic counter-terrorist capability for homeland defense. Secondly, we must maintain our operational commitment to the campaign against global terrorism in Afghanistan. Support to this operation is my highest priority once homeland defense capability has been assured. Finally, the unit must expand in size and capability IAW government direction in order to effectively counter future terrorist threats at home and abroad. The current state of global insecurity dictates that the unit must equip and train to meet a wide range of potential asymmetric threats at home and abroad as quickly as possible.¹⁵²

Aside from the JTF 2 deployment in the aftermath of 9/11, the Government ordered DND to undertake another initiative that would later cross into the CANSOF orbit, specifically the Joint Nuclear Biological Chemical Defence Company (JNBCD Coy). One of the post 9/11 issues that emerged was the terrorist use of biological and/or chemical weapons, especially anthrax or ricin. As such, the Government directed DND to establish a capability that could respond to threats within Canada with lesser/residual capability to operate abroad (in both cases in a hostile environment – dirty/contaminated environment and one that was opposed by an enemy) although it would need support/protection from a direct fire organization).¹⁵³

JTF 2 indicated that it was incapable of doing the task. The DCDS agreed fearing that adding that capability to the unit would create a span of control that would simply be too large. Therefore, the DCDS decided on a separate company so that expertise could be focused. This specialist unit stood up on 22 April 2002, and became a DCDS controlled unit operating out of CFB Trenton.¹⁵⁴ The JNBCD Coy was formed from a cadre of instructors from the Canadian Forces Nuclear Biological Chemical School in CFB Borden to complement the RCMP national response capability. Specifically, it was to establish a stand-alone CBRN Response Team (RT) to form the CAF component of the National CBRN RT with the RCMP and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

In December 2003, the National CBRN RT was declared operationally ready. The following year, the JNBCD Coy began providing CBRN support to JTF 2 and was integrated into the Immediate Reaction Task Force (IRTF) shortly thereafter. Unfortunately, being a NDHQ controlled unit, with no real Service affiliation, it suffered accordingly with regard to resource and manning priorities.

Meanwhile, the Canadian pull-out of Afghanistan in 2002 did not last long. The CAF returned the following year in 2003, as a contributor to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul. As part of the redeployment, JTF 2 also maintained a footprint on the ground in the form of a Joint Liaison Team-Afghanistan (JLT-A) from 2003-2005. The JLT-A was embedded in the CAF compound at Camp Julien and the team was under operational control (OPCON) to the Operation Athena Task Force Commander.

For JTF 2, the post 9/11 era now meant that the unit was committed to an out of area combat role. This meant that since that time, the unit had to be capable of

sustained out of area operations, which ranged from small teams for specialized missions, to squadron level combat tasks that were supported by a Special Operation Command and Control Element (SOCCE). The SOCCE contains all the specialized staff, strategic communications, intelligence and geomatics components necessary to support deployed special operations and provide the interface with NDHQ and coalition and Combined and Joint Special Operations Task Forces.

While JTF 2 and the whole SOF concept was relatively unknown prior to 9/11 and largely ignored by most in the military, the post 9/11 era suddenly saw an explosion of SOF supporters. SOF became, in the words of strategists and analysts, the “Force of Choice.” A Report of the Standing Committee on Defence and Veterans Affairs in 2002, entitled *Facing our Responsibilities: The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces*, strongly recommended that “The Department of National Defence undertake a study on the future of JTF 2 to determine its long-term requirements in terms of resources, the implications of overseas deployments of some of its personnel, and the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a Canadian special force unit similar to U.S. and UK special force units operating in Afghanistan.”¹⁵⁵

That same year, the Army, through its Land Forces Doctrine and Training System (LFDTS) Command, undertook a study of developing a special operations capability (SOC). The working group recognized a “SOF/SOC” gap between what it considered the JTF 2 (Black Role) and conventional light infantry battalions (LIBs). It focused on four specific tasks:

1. protective operations;
2. direct action;
3. special reconnaissance; and
4. military assistance.

The core intent of the army vision was to re-role its light infantry battalions into a SOF role. This initiative never came to fruition because undercurrents at higher levels soon displaced any Army attempt at developing a SOF capability of its own.

The Afghan SOF experience, as mentioned earlier, matured the Canadian thinking with regard to its SOF capability, particularly its shortfalls. A 2003 JTF 2 paper, written by commanders of the SOTF that supported the American OEF, identified key capability gaps based on their experience in theatre. They identified the need

for an integral cordon force, as well as integral aviation support. Importantly, the case they made was for the need to enhance the JTF 2 capability by increasing the CANSOF community with the necessary enablers to provide JTF 2 with the necessary support to conduct independent operations.

The idea of expanding the Canadian SOF capability was germinating in some corners of NDHQ as well. The Term SOG, or Special Operations Group, began to be used as early as 26 November 2003. The concept was included in a Briefing Note making a case for a “SOG Operations Centre.” The idea was to create a compartmentalized SOG command centre to run SOF operations.

By 2004, the concept had gained traction. In September of that year, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) Vice-Admiral Ron Buck chaired the Future Security Working Group. He pulled (then) Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Day in as “the pen” or primary writer on SOF capability. Day spent the next three months fleshing out the idea of the SOG, which was centred on JTF 2. The limiting factor was that there was no national appetite for formalizing the ad hoc arrangement of support units or capability. The constraint remained that any requirement (e.g. JNBCD Coy, intelligence, aviation) for international operations would be a “bolt-on fix” as required.

The focus on a larger CANSOF entity picked up momentum the following year. However, before that, international events would push the strategic relevance of JTF 2 even higher. On 24 December 2004, the Americans requested Canada to deploy another Canadian SOTF as early as possible. The request affirmed that Canada’s previous SOF contribution to OEF in Afghanistan in 2001-2002, “was highly valued by the US.” Moreover, it confirmed “that relatively small numbers of special operations forces exert a disproportionately large operational impact.”¹⁵⁶

This news came as no surprise since JTF 2’s performance in Afghanistan had elicited praise from the American ambassador Paul Cellucci. He publicly stated, “Canada’s elite Tier 1 JTF 2 is as capable as any Tier 1 Special Forces in the world [and it] makes a significant contribution whenever deployed.”¹⁵⁷

The request to deploy another Canadian SOTF was strongly supported by both the CDS, General Rick Hillier, and the Deputy Minister, D.M. Elcock. They believed that the deployment of Canadian SOF to Afghanistan would make Canada’s ongoing commitment to an active engagement in the Campaign Against Terrorism clearly

evident. The deployment also demonstrated the nation's direct burden sharing with the Americans, who were considered our closest allies. The deployment was also in consonance with the ongoing strategic objective for the CAF in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Furthermore, the deployment of a SOTF would assist the government of Afghanistan in providing security and stability in the country, as well as supporting reconstruction activities. In addition, it would also contribute to the elimination of Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and other anti-coalition militants as continuing terrorist threats to international peace and security. Finally, the deployment would support efforts to address the humanitarian needs of Afghans.

CANSOFCOM



Village search, Zabul Province.

In sum, the rationale behind the deployment was strong. As a result, the high-level support was not surprising. But then again, the senior decision-makers were all well versed in the strength of the unit. “One of my first visits,” General Hillier acknowledged, “was to Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2), our special forces unit based near Ottawa, no strangers to me after the many operations.” He explained, “JTF 2 troopers are the Olympic athletes of soldiering, our version of gold medalists, taking on the most difficult missions and tasks with a level of skill and professionalism

that has earned the respect of Special Forces units around the world. Like the U.S. Delta Force or the British Special Air Service (SAS), they get the most dangerous and demanding of missions, from hostage rescues to acting as bodyguards for VIPs (like me!) to operating for long periods of time on their own in enemy territory.”¹⁵⁸

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CANSOF CPP for Prime Minister Chrétien and President Hamid Karzai.

Not surprisingly, with such endorsement, the Government of Canada authorized the deployment of a JTF 2 SOTF to Afghanistan in support of OEF on 1 June 2005. Its mission was “to conduct combat operations in the Afghanistan theatre of operations (ATO) in support of US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) for a period of one year.”¹⁵⁹ CANSOF was back at war.

CHAPTER 5

CANADIAN SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES COMMAND (CANSOFCOM)

While the JTF 2 SOTF was conducting missions in Kandahar and Helmand provinces, developments that would dramatically impact CANSOF were transpiring in Ottawa. The Afghanistan experience, as already noted, proved to be a watershed for CANSOF. Very quickly the tempo of operations, as well as the SOTF's execution of the myriad of missions clearly highlighted force structure concerns that prevented JTF 2 from reaching its full potential. As already mentioned, a 2003 study paper written by CANSOF staff examined the lessons learned from the 2001-2002 mission in Afghanistan. It identified the need for a Tier 2 SOF capability within Canada to support JTF 2 operations. This call for additional resources did not fall on deaf ears.

In February 2005, General Hillier, newly appointed as the CDS, told his general officers at a special general/flag officer seminar in Cornwall, Ontario that "We need an integrated Canadian Forces that consists of maritime, air, land and special forces, woven together to make a more effective military."¹⁶⁰ This was the first time that a CDS spoke of Canada's SOF capability within the context as a fourth environment within the CAF. Later that year, on 19 April 2005, General Hillier declared that he intended "on bringing JTF 2, along with all the enablers that it would need, to conduct operations successfully into one organization with one commander."¹⁶¹ This would prove to be a major step for CANSOF.

General Hillier revealed his transformational agenda in the *2005 Defence Policy Statement* (DPS). In this document, Hillier set out his initial initiatives that focused on restructuring units and expanding the CAF's expeditionary capabilities. The crux of transformation was to create units capable of performing integrated operations, specifically bolstering the institution's ability to conduct joint operations. Part of this equation, to Hillier in any case, meant SOF as well. As such, under the DPS a number of joint units were to be formed. These included a Special Operations Group (SOG); a Standing Contingency Task Force; and a Mission Specific Task Force.

To achieve his transformation vision, Hillier created a number of CDS Action Teams (CAT) in the summer of 2005. As part of the “Capability” CAT, a special team consisting of (then) Lieutenant-Colonel Mike Day and (then) Majors Mike Rouleau and Kevin Morton focused on the SOF component. Specifically, they established the conceptual underpinnings for the Command and Control, Force Generation and Force Employment of CANSOFCOM (and by extension its units). The team developed a series of four to five one page briefing notes on the key SOF issues that they presented direct to the CDS. These informative briefs became the real driver behind the CANSOFCOM concept. By the end of the process, according to the SOF CAT members, “The CDS was adamant that the opportunity cost to the CAF of creating CANSOFCOM was justifiable under the premise that integrated SOF effects could be brought to bear.” Lieutenant-General Day recalled,

Hillier knew exactly what he wanted in CANSOF. We provided rigor to support what he wanted. He had a very clear view. The core idea, core focus and core capability came from Rick Hillier’s head, strongly reinforced by American capability. CAT teams were his socialization process to the CAF. They helped him prove some of his C2 and Service interests.¹⁶²

Despite the CDS’s vision, as a function of internal resistance, resource constraints, as well as an evolution of thinking, Hillier developed a second set of transformational policies clearly aimed to reorganize the CAF command structure. Much like his earlier proposed force structure changes, the latest initiatives were focused on making the CAF a more joint and operationally capability military. As such, Hillier collapsed the DCDS office and stood up four new commands. Canada Command was responsible for all CAF operations in Canada and North America; Canadian Expeditionary Command (CEFCOM) for all operations outside of North America with the exception of special operations; CANSOFCOM was charged with the latter; and Canadian Operational Support Command (CANOSCOM) was charged with commanding all combat service and combat service support operations.

Hillier laid out his finalized vision in his 18 October 2005, “CDS Planning Guidance – CF Transformation.” He described his end-state as a “CF that is strategically relevant, operationally responsive and tactically decisive, supported by an effective, efficient and adaptable defence institution; capable of operating within a dynamic and evolving security spectrum.” His intent was equally clear:

The CF will become more effective, relevant and responsive, and its profile and ability to provide leadership at home and abroad will be increased. The CF will become more effective by better integrating maritime, land, air and special operations forces. It will become more relevant both at home and abroad, by adapting its capabilities and force structure to deal with threats that arise from international instability, especially in fragile states. It will become more responsive by enhancing its ability to act quickly in the event of crises, whether in Canada or around the world.¹⁶³

Hillier's number one priority was the stand-up of the new commands. In July 2005, the CDS ordered the creation of the SOG. In October he authorized the re-naming of the SOG to CANSOFCOM.¹⁶⁴ On 1 December 2005, the Honourable Bill Graham, MND, signed Ministerial Order 2005078, which officially "organize Canadian Special Operations Command as a command of the Canadian Forces" and directed that CANSOFCOM "be embodied in the Regular Force."¹⁶⁵

By 2005, JTF 2 had also gained a great degree of attention and had built its reputation. Its domestic credibility with Law Enforcement Agencies, as well as its international operations in Haiti, the Balkans, Africa and Afghanistan had peeled away some of its former obscurity and made it a unit with solid credentials. A Senate report referred to JTF 2 as "the sharpest edge of its [Canada's] military spear."¹⁶⁶ Similarly, another Government of Canada publication, *Canada's International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World – DEFENCE*, mentioned JTF 2 no less than forty times. It lauded:

A Special Operations Group will be established to respond to terrorism and threats to Canadians and Canadian interests around the world. This group will include Joint Task Force 2, our special operations and counterterrorism unit; a special operations aviation capability centered on helicopters; and supporting land and maritime forces. The Special Operations Group will be capable of operating as an independent unit or contributing to other joint force structures. Integrating our special operations forces in this manner will increase their impact in operations, as well as the range of options available to government in the deployment of the Canadian Forces.¹⁶⁷



CANSOFCOM Crest.

Cognizant of the internal resistance and negative undercurrents to his transformation vision and the necessity to achieve momentum, Hillier ordered the new Commands to be officially functioning as of 1 February 2006. As such, CANSOFCOM stood up in NDHQ on the appointed day with a skeletal staff of only 48 personnel. Its genesis actually sprang from the embryonic Counter-Terrorism Special Operations (CTSO) cell, which consisted of a colonel and a dozen staff officers. The CTSO cell was the strategic interface between JTF 2 and NDHQ and it folded into the headquarters once the Command was stood up.

The purpose of CANSOFCOM was clearly articulated as the need “to force develop, generate and, where required, employ and sustain Special Operations Task Forces (SOTF) capable of achieving tactical, operational and strategic effects required by the Government of Canada (GoC).”¹⁶⁸ Its mission was to “Provide the CDS and operational commanders agile, high-readiness Special Operations Forces capable of conducting special operations across the spectrum of conflict at home and abroad.”¹⁶⁹

The Command consisted of a small headquarters, JTF 2, the Joint Nuclear, Biological Chemical Defence Company (JNBCD Company), which was officially re-named in September 2007 to the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU), 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS) and a new “Tier 2” combatant unit called the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR). The stand-up of the Command was not without its critics. The Army and the Air Force lost substantial

personnel and resources in the transformation process. Understandably, they were not particularly enamoured with the new Command.

Despite the resistance, Hillier believed in the value of CANSOFCOM. After all, it is a high reliability organization that produces high readiness and responsive SOF that are able to provide national strategic security solutions. It delivers agile forces capable of precision effects, both direct and indirect, thereby achieving the CAF's requirements and the CDS mandate, by producing outcomes that are timely and of high strategic value for modest cost. Moreover, CANSOFCOM contributes to national defence and security through the provision of three strategic capabilities:

1. The delivery of an effective counter-terrorism response both domestically and abroad;
2. The ability to access, understand and influence operational environments; and
3. The ability to project immediate reaction, rapidly deployable SOF in response to emerging or immediate threats to the nation.

More specifically, CANSOFCOM is capable of undertaking the following tasks:

- a. Counter Terrorism;
 - i. Maritime Special Operations;
 - ii. Maritime Counter-terrorism;
 - iii. Opposed Boarding;
- b. Direct action;
- c. Special Recovery Operations;
 - i. Personnel Recovery Operations;
 - ii. Hostage Rescue Operations;
 - iii. Non-combatant Evacuation Operations;
 - iv. Material Recovery Operations;
- d. Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction;
 - i. Counter-proliferation;
 - ii. Non-proliferation;
 - iii. Weapons of Mass Destruction Elimination;

- e. Special Protection Operations;
 - i. Close Personal Protection;
 - ii. Special Force Protection;
- f. Sensitive Site Exploitation;
- g. Special Reconnaissance;
- h. Irregular Warfare;
 - i. Military Assistance;
 - ii. Stability Activities;
 - iii. Counterinsurgency;
- i. Special Aerospace Warfare;
 - i. Special Operations Air-Land Integration;
 - ii. Airborne Reconnaissance and Surveillance; and
 - iii. Airborne Fire Support.



JTF 2 Crest.

Within the Command, JTF 2, in many ways, now lost some of its independence. It now became part of a larger organization that imposed additional oversight and management. Nonetheless, it was the senior unit in CANSOFCOM and one of two National Mission Force units within the Command. The wording of its mission also eventually changed. It evolved from “to provide a force capable of rendering armed assistance in the resolution of an incident that is, or has the potential of, affecting the national interest. The primary focus is counter-terrorism; however, the unit

can expect to be employed on other high value strategic tasks” to the new text that read “to protect the Canadian national interest and combat threats to Canadians at home and abroad.”¹⁷⁰

When CANSOFCOM was stood-up, the JNBCD Coy was cut from the DCDS and placed under command of CANSOFCOM as an integral unit. By July 2007, a cadre was selected from JNBCD Coy to create the re-designated and expanded CJIRU, which is a SOF CBRN unit and the second of two National Mission Force units within CANSOFCOM. CJIRU’s mission is to provide timely, agile and specialized Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) support to the Government of Canada in order to prevent, control and mitigate CBRN threats to Canada, Canadians and Canadian interests. The Unit is a core member of the National CBRN Response Team, and is also responsible for Counter-Terrorism (CT), Special Reconnaissance (SR) and Counter-Proliferation (CP).



CJIRU Crest.

CJIRU has three key mandates:

- a. Respond to CBRN events as an element of the National CBRNE Response Team;
- b. Provide an agile integral part of the CANSOFCOM Immediate Response Task Force (IRTF); and
- c. Provide specialized support to CAF expeditionary operations.

The third addition to the Command was 427 Squadron (Sqn), an Air Force aviation unit that was re-designated 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (SOAS) and embedded as an integral element within CANSOFCOM. Its mission is to provide dedicated special operations aviation effects as part of high-readiness Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) for domestic and international operations. The SOAS also has a secondary role of furnishing tactical and administrative/utility aviation for domestic contingencies, which includes support to secondary Search and Rescue.



427 SOAS Crest.

Despite its only recent integration within CANSOFCOM, 427 SOAS and its affiliated aviation squadrons have had a distinguished history of support to special operations in Canada. During the summer of 1990, a sub-unit of 450 Sqn, designated SERT Assault Helicopter Flight (SAH Flt), was formed to provide dedicated support to the RCMP SERT. When the SERT transferred its responsibilities to JTF 2 in April 1993, the SAH Flt increased its size to a full SAH squadron. However, the move of 450 Sqn from Ottawa to Montreal in the summer of 1994, combined with the transition from the CH-135 Twin-Engine Huey to the CH-146 Griffon helicopter began to create operational limitations. As a result, the support role to JTF 2 was transferred to 427 Sqn, stationed in CFB Petawawa, in the summer of 1996 with the creation of the Special Operations Aviation (SOA) Flight, designated “B” Flight.

By 1997, the first wave of 427 Sqn SOA personnel began their transition to the Griffon. Fifty per cent of the “B” Flight remained on stand-by duty on the Huey platform. The squadron completed its transition by year-end. Throughout this period “B” Flight expanded its capability to keep in sync with the maturation of JTF 2. As such, “B” Flight pushed the envelope on urban operations and began to trial an initial maritime counter terrorism (MCT) capability. In October 2003, “B” Flight participated in its first national level MCT exercise.

The fourth unit in CANSOFCOM was a newly created unit. Originally, during the conception and planning phase it was called the Special Service Unit (SSU) and was designed as a “Tier 2 Ranger” capability to support JTF 2. This idea was borne from JTF 2’s initial Afghan experience. Planning documents explained, “There is a need for the CF to develop a second-tier SOF capability to bridge the gap between JTF 2 and CF conventional forces. It is proposed that a single Special Service Unit be created to support JTF 2 operations and to conduct specialized rapid reaction tasks in support of government objectives.”¹⁷¹

The planners envisioned that the SSU would conduct missions such as:

- a. deploy as an initial Canadian contribution to emerging operations for up to 90 days;
- b. conduct raids and direct action missions where surgical shooting skills are not required;
- c. conduct non-combatant evacuation tasks (NEO); and
- d. provide intimate support to JTF 2 elements conducting hostage rescue or surgical missions by providing outer cordon security, heavier fire support, quick reaction forces, cut-offs and domination of larger targets.

To be effective it was necessary that the SSU organization would “complement JTF 2 by mirroring its specialized insertion capabilities, its high readiness, its ability to compartmentalize information and maintain operational security, its tactics, techniques and operating procedures.”¹⁷² In addition, sharing of equipment, such as communications and night vision equipment, would be necessary.

The planners envisioned the SSU to compose of approximately 750 selected personnel organized into: a unit Headquarters, three Commando Groups (each capable of

either independent operations or integrating into a JTF 2 force package); a Special Forces Company capable of conducting reconnaissance, training, stability and/or influence operations by supporting local leadership and indigenous populations in post-conflict or humanitarian situations; and a logistics and administrative support element. The SSU, eventually renamed the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR), was a direct result of the realization that a “relevant, responsive and effective CANSOFCOM” meant the addition of an agile, robust SOF unit capable of supporting others, or conducting a broad range of domestic and expeditionary special operations missions on its own.¹⁷³ General Hillier explained, “What we needed was a complete special operations team that works closely together and can interoperate seamlessly, as opposed to being put together on an ad hoc basis.” He declared, “That’s exactly what CSOR will do — provide the missing assets in our special operations team and the capabilities that we simply didn’t have before.”¹⁷⁴



CSOR Crest.

The initial manning for CSOR was drawn from a company from the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (3 RCR). The unit officially stood-up on 13 August 2006 with the graduation of its first class of Special Operations Basic Qualification Course (SOBQ) graduates.¹⁷⁵ CSOR is a Special Forces unit with the capabilities and responsiveness to operate in austere and hostile environments throughout the spectrum of conflict. It is optimized to be a kinetic force with the agility to conduct and support a broad range of special operations missions. The Regiment is built upon the Special Forces Operator, a SOF generalist who pursues mastery of Special Warfare, Special Reconnaissance, and Direct Action. Importantly, CSOR provides

the Government of Canada with a robust, flexible, high readiness expeditionary force that can be deployed abroad or in defence of Canada. As a growing and evolving unit, the Regiment's ability to rapidly adapt to the dynamic security environment provided CANSOFCOM with a versatile, multi-mission force, capable of delivering tactical to strategic level SOF effects.

Although initially the core of CANSOFCOM seemed to revolve around JTF 2, the Command quickly evolved. "We don't talk about deploying units," then-CANSOFCOM Commander Brigadier-General Mike Day explained in 2008, "We talk about deploying special operation task forces which are absolutely an amalgam of all the parts of this command."¹⁷⁶ One such example was the publicly announced SOTF called "Arrowhead." This task force (TF) was not created for a long-term mission, but instead was designed to allow the Canadian military to quickly put a "footprint" into a crisis area.¹⁷⁷ "Arrowhead will be the precursor to a larger SOTF if needed," Day explained.¹⁷⁸ He stated CSOR would be responsible for creating the necessary command team to co-ordinate the response to an international crisis or mission. However, the task force would be able to draw from personnel in various CANSOFCOM units as needed, and those assigned to TF Arrowhead would be on 24/7 alert to deploy.¹⁷⁹

The continuing nuance of CANSOFCOM as the fourth service was also advanced when, on 4 February 2008, the CDS granted Honour Bearing status to JTF 2 and CSOR. This honour is "afforded to combatant units whose functional purpose is to close with and conquer, neutralize or destroy the enemy as an effective fighting force. Only combatant military units are entitled to be publicly recognized for active participation in battle against a formed and armed enemy through the award of battle honours and honorary distinctions."¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the CDS also approved that the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion (better known as the Canadian component of the FSSF) be perpetuated by CSOR. This award meant that CSOR would carry the battles honours of the FSSF from the Second World War.¹⁸¹

Meanwhile, as CANSOFCOM was busy standing up and dealing with its initial growing pains, the JTF 2 SOTF was back in Afghanistan since 2005, supporting OEF. Although originally committed for only a year, the mandate was continually extended up until the end of combat operations in 2011. Their mission, however, remained largely unchanged. General Hillier affirmed that Canadian SOF had established a presence on Afghanistan battlefields and that they were effectively

disrupting the Taliban leadership.¹⁸² He declared, “What we want to do is take out the [Taliban] commanders who are engaged in orchestrating, facilitating, paying, leading, planning and driving folks to attack us or attack the Afghans or attack the innocent.” He added, “And our special forces are focused very much on that. ... I said, during a recent speech, that we had removed from the battlefield six commanders who were responsible for the deaths of 21 Canadian soldiers.” Hillier declared, “Well that’s changed. We’ve removed seven commanders who have been responsible for the deaths of 27 soldiers.”¹⁸³

Artwork by Silvia Pecota



“Precision SOF”

Canadian scholars have reinforced Hillier’s assertions. A team studying operations in Kandahar province noted, “insurgent operations in 2007 were increasingly characterized by lack of co-ordination and poor planning, which could be attributed to the growing effectiveness of ISAF’s Special Operations Forces.” They explained, “SOF units from all ISAF contributor nations in the south were pooled for the task of arresting known bomb-making cell leaders, drug lords, and a legal case prepared for their arrest, Canadian (and other ISAF) SOF troops would be deployed to apprehend the suspect. As often as not, if the target was a Tier 1 Taliban leader,

he would try to shoot his way out, with predictable results. Consequently, Taliban command-and-control capacity in the south in 2007 was less effective than the previous fall.”¹⁸⁴

In addition, conventional commanders also spoke to the influence CANSOF was exerting in theatre. A Canadian battle group commander noted the impressive effect SOF had on his area of operations in Kandahar. “The SOF strikes had a chilling effect on the Taliban. In one strike they killed an important leader and 16 of his fighters. The Taliban leadership in Kandahar City felt a lot of pressure from SOF. They were moving every day so we saw a reduction in activity. They [Taliban] were being disrupted – they were on the move, on the run.”¹⁸⁵

Artwork by Katherine Taylor



“Creating Capability.”

And this result was exactly the effect the CDS expected from his CANSOF SOTF. “Without the proactive operations necessary to precisely track [Taliban leaders] locate them and attack them,” General Hillier insisted, “they with their forces would still be trying to kill us.”¹⁸⁶ And so, as the campaign in the Canadian theatre of operations evolved from 2005 to 2011, so too did the specific CANSOF tasks, as well as their tactics, techniques and procedures, to ensure that the standing CANSOF SOTF in Afghanistan provided the necessary effects to support the ongoing

counter-insurgency efforts. CANSOF's efforts in Afghanistan would later earn them the MND's Award for Operational Excellence in 2011.

Afghanistan proved to be the catalyst for growth and maturation for several CANSOFCOM units. For example, When 427 Sqn was re-designated 427 SOAS in February 2006, "B" Flight remained the dedicated specialist organization responsible for supporting JTF 2 in the domestic counter-terrorism role, while "A" Flt provided general aviation support to the Command. At this time, both the CAF and the Command saw 427 SOAS operating only in a domestic role. However, operational requirements in the Afghan theatre of operations eventually forced a paradigm shift. Through innovation and adaptability, 427 SOAS developed an expeditionary capability. By 2009, 427 SOAS pilots and flight crew were flying MI-17 HiP helicopters in direct support of the CANSOFCOM SOTF in theatre and they continued to do so until the end of Canadian combat operations in Afghanistan in 2011. The operational tour of duty was only the first in what would become an expeditionary capability that has been exercised in the United States, Jamaica and Iraq, as well as in multiple countries in North-West Africa.

CANSOFCOM



427 SOAS flying contracted Mi17 HiP helicopters in Afghanistan.

Similarly, Afghanistan provided the crucible for the newly minted SOF unit. CSOR personnel initially supported CANSOFCOM missions, developing and honing

their individual and collective skills. They led their first autonomous SOTF in theatre in 2008. They progressed into carrying out mobility patrols and developing their niche in Special Warfare, working “By, With and Through” indigenous Afghan forces. During the war, CSOR personnel undertook training and mentoring of Afghan National Security Forces. Specifically, they mentored Afghan Special Forces Commandos, Afghan National Army “Toofan” (Storm Troopers) and the Afghan National Police Provincial Response Team – Kandahar. All went on to distinguish themselves in combat against armed insurgent groups. In addition, CSOR personnel also conducted Village Stability Operations (VSO).

This Special Forces persona continued on return to Canada. CSOR worked with Jamaican Defence Force Personnel, military forces in Malaysia and Belize, as well as armed forces in African countries such as Mali, Niger and Chad. Its focus on military assistance and training with other militaries solidified its identity as a Special Forces unit.

CANSOFCOM



CANSOF operators conducting training for Afghan commandos.



CANSOF operator conducting training with partnered Mauritanian Armed Forces personnel.

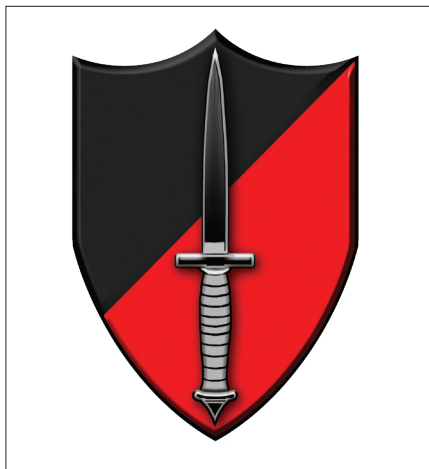
Activities certainly did not slow down for the Command following the Canadian withdrawal from combat operations in Afghanistan in 2011. Continual internal evolution, as well as a high tempo in domestic and international exercises, operations and tasks kept the Command in constant motion.

In 2010, the ever-increasing complexity of the skills and the need for effective stewardship of the CJIRU operators prompted the Unit, which was in a constant state of evolution due to the dynamic contemporary security environment, to develop a unique CBRN military occupation for the CAF. It maintained a hectic schedule and deployed domestically and internationally, including the lead for a SOTF in Jordan in 2012. Through its continual evolution it earned its place as a leader in its field, and it became a highly valued member by both its interagency partners and international allies.



CJIRU operators conduct a site exploitation.

Another major inflection point in 2010 was the creation of the CANSOFCOM Professional Development Centre, which was later renamed the Education & Research Centre (ERC). The creation of the ERC, whose mission is “to support the professional development framework within the Command in order to continually develop and enhance the cognitive capacity of CANSOFCOM personnel,” signalled the Command’s realization that to continue to ensure operational success in the complex, ambiguous and dynamic contemporary and future security environments requires investment in the cognitive development of its members.¹⁸⁷ After all, the foundation of SOF operational capability is the human platform and is emphasized through cognitive strength allowing for critical thinking, innovation, adaptation and problem solving within the context of a broad spectrum of conflict. This education and training allows SOF personnel to develop and employ specific skills during mission execution, contextualize the operational and strategic effects achieved by their missions and rapidly operationalize new equipment and technologies.



CSOTC Crest.

Two years later, in 2012, the Command continued its growth with the establishment of the Canadian Special Operations Training Centre (CSOTC). Its mission is to educate, train and develop CANSOFCOM personnel to support the Command's operational outputs. Notably, its continually evolving nature has given it many attributes of an actual CANSOF warfare centre. The concept of a specialized training centre was embedded in the Command's original concept of operations in 2006 but was not created due to ongoing combat operations in Afghanistan.

Originally created with only a small cadre of experienced CANSOFCOM personnel, CSOTC focused on a handful of courses designed to provide a common entry point for Command support personnel, as well as some specific technical skills training. However, CSOTC continued to expand its individual courseware offerings in a progressive manner while absorbing additional institutional responsibilities such as recruiting, lessons learned, human performance and individual training authorities. As such, the centre integrates pan-Command lessons learned, simulation, skills requirements and cultural values into courseware in order to maximize operational effectiveness.

In fact, CSOTC now provides the governance for all individual training, including training safety, conducted within the Command. As such, it is responsible to supervise and monitor all individual training across CANSOFCOM while conducting all CANSOFCOM common individual training. The institutional responsibilities

that the CSOTC carries out are achieved through a unique blend of experienced CANSOFCOM operators and specialists with CAF personnel in key roles. In 2016, the ERC was housed under the framework of the CSOTC to give it an academic engine capable of delivering university level education, research and publications.

Throughout the growth of CANSOFCOM, the tempo of operations continued unabated. CANSOFCOM assets were involved in the non-combatant evacuation of Canadian personnel from Libya during the revolution in February 2011, as well as the NATO intervention under Operation Odyssey Dawn (within the auspices of UNSCR 1973) in support of anti-Gaddafi opposition movement and the return of the Canadian Head of Mission (HoM) in August.

The Command also maintained its global military assistance and training missions throughout this period in locations such as the Caribbean, Central and South America, across a number of African nations in the trans-Sahel and North African regions, as well as Malaysia. Importantly, it also participated in the Coalition effort against the Islamic State (IS) or Daesh in Iraq.

The rise of *Daesh* in 2013, one of the many consequences of the Syrian Civil War that began two years prior, quickly had reverberating effects throughout the Middle East and the World. By end July 2014, Daesh effectively controlled a large swath of territory that stretched from the eastern edge of Aleppo, in Syria, to Fallujah in western Iraq, including Mosul to the North. Moreover, Daesh also began an aggressive campaign of bombing and assassinations in Baghdad itself. Its success and territorial gains led al-Baghdadi, the Daesh leader, to proclaim the creation of the Caliphate on 29 June 2014 in Mosul, which simply put, was a declaration that al-Baghdadi was now the spiritual leader of all Islam, a claim that was largely dismissed by the Muslim and Western world.

As of September 2014, analysts estimated that approximately eight million people were under Daesh control and that the terror organization possessed anywhere from 40,000 square kilometres (km) to 90,000 square km (i.e. the size of Belgium and Jordan respectively) of Syria and Iraq.¹⁸⁸ Although Daesh made graphically public their terror tactics and disregard for humanity, few politicians or their publics had a stomach for military intervention that cost both national blood and treasure. Most were satisfied to let the troubles in the Middle East fester with minimal interference. However, the continuing ruthless, savage and extremely violent nature

of Daesh eventually pushed the international community into action. The terrorist organization publicly embraced, through videos, photos and publications, their brutal character highlighting their actions of indiscriminate kidnap, rape, torture, bombing and murder.

CANSOFCOM



Neutralizing Daesh positions threatening Iraqi partnered forces in Northern Iraq.

It was the beheading of the journalist James Foley that marked the first time Daesh had killed an American citizen since the Syrian conflict erupted in March 2011. This action became the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Ironically, many experts believed the gruesome video actually fuelled the popularity of the extremist organization and helped recruit more foreign fighters to its cause.¹⁸⁹ This beheading was followed by two other beheadings, one of another American journalist and the other a British aid worker, in September 2014. These killings, combined with Daesh's seemingly unstoppable pursuit of grabbing more territory finally crossed the threshold of Western international intervention.

On 24 September 2014, President Barak Obama announced to the UN General Assembly that Daesh was a “network of death that must be destroyed.”¹⁹⁰ He had already launched Operation Inherent Resolve and assembled a 22 international coalition to eradicate Daesh. On 11 August 2014, the Canadian Government directed the CDS to join the international effort to provide airlift for humanitarian supplies to the crisis in Iraq. On 4 September, CANSOFCOM deployed a small team to provide the Government of Canada “with an assessment from the ground on the situation.”¹⁹¹ By early October the CDS had authorized, under Operation Impact, the deployment of a larger SOTF to “advise and assist, and on order accompany host nation forces in order to improve security in Iraq.”¹⁹² In addition, the Government authorized the deployment of a number of aircraft including six fighter jets, an aerial refuelling plane, and two Aurora surveillance aircraft to assist with the Coalition bombing campaign.

CANSOFCOM



Working with partnered forces in Northern Iraq.

The CANSOF SOTF was responsible for advising and assisting both the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), as well as advising and assisting the Kurdistan Security Forces (KSF) and training the KSF and Peshmerga forces. By late November 2015, the SOTF was in place supporting the respective forces. CANSOF forces became instrumental in assisting their partner forces to blunt Daesh attacks in eastern Iraq in late 2016, and subsequently roll them back to Mosul, where CANSOF snipers set a world record by killing a Daesh insurgent, who was in the process of attacking an ISF position, at an amazing 3,540 metres.

And so, twelve years into its existence, steeped in a rich special operations legacy, CANSOFCOM has proven itself as an integral national capability. It has conducted operations domestically and around the world and throughout has demonstrated a high level of professionalism and expertise. It has provided DND and the Government of Canada a unique capability that is unmatched elsewhere in the CAF or any other governmental department. “I think it is fair to say the worth of Canada’s Special Forces has been so completely proven to the chain of command – the Canadian Forces and the government of Canada – that the question is not, ‘Does it survive? What is its structure?’” opined Lieutenant-General Day, but rather, “the question is, ‘How much do we want it to grow by?’”¹⁹³ The Canadian National Security Advisor, Richard Fadden, agreed. “The Growth of SOF,” he told a large conference crowd, “is inevitable.”¹⁹⁴

These were not empty words. They were reinforced by others. General Hillier confirmed that “our special forces are the tools of choice.” He affirmed, “They are in incredible demand. Our special forces are world class.”¹⁹⁵ Similarly, retired Lieutenant-General Michael Gauthier, a former commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Command, declared, “There is not a more tactically agile capability in the world.” He insisted, “They are as good as any in the world, and what they do is function effectively in chaotic and complex environments.”¹⁹⁶ A former CDS, Vice-Admiral Larry Murray asserted, “I don’t know where we would be today if we didn’t develop that [SOF] capability back in the 1990s.”¹⁹⁷

Another former CDS also agreed. General Walter Natynczyk praised the work of the country’s SOF and stated, “they’ve proven their worth during the past 17 years in war zones from Bosnia to Afghanistan.”¹⁹⁸ Natynczyk affirmed, “The units [SOF] will remain essential in the future [since] we see that irregular warfare, the counterinsurgency we are seeing in Afghanistan, is occurring and could occur in other

parts of the world.” He noted, “The one strong aspect of special forces is that it is very surgical in nature. They need a high level of ... competence.”¹⁹⁹ Another CDS, General Tom Lawson reinforced these accolades. “CANSOF,” he asserted, “is one of Canada’s most trusted institutions. It fills gaps no-one else is able to.”²⁰⁰

As previously mentioned, on 1 September 2011, the MND bestowed a new award on CANSOFCOM, namely the Minister of National Defence Award for Operational Excellence. This award given in recognition of exceptional performance, professionalism and tremendous dedication in the conduct of operations in support to Canada’s national effort in Afghanistan over the past decade. The then MND, Peter MacKay, later acknowledged, “In the volatile world in which we live, that Special Forces capability is extremely important in your arsenal of national defence and your ability to contribute internationally.”²⁰¹

CANSOFCOM



High Altitude parachute descent.

The MND's words ring true. Throughout Canada's history, the national special operations legacy has demonstrated its saliency to the nation. From the earliest Ranger Tradition, through the Second World War and the Cold War, to the current campaign against terrorism, Canada's special operations capability has proven to be amongst the best in the world. CANSOFCOM continues this tradition at home and on the front lines in Iraq and other trouble spots around the world. Moreover, it continues to evolve and adapt to meet the future threats to the nation. In the end, the Command lives the words of its motto – "Viam Inveniemus"/"We will find a way."

CANSOFCOM



Maritime Counter-Terrorism exercise.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ENDNOTES

1 Dan Lamothe, “Retiring SOCOM Chief: ‘We are in the Golden Age of Special Operations,’” *The Washington Post*, 29 August 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2014/08/29/retiring-top-navy-seal-we-are-in-the-golden-age-of-special-operations-2/?utm_term=.a8663dc140d9, accessed 3 December 2016.

2 The Conservative Harper Government returned the formal name of the Canadian Forces (CF) to its former title, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), in December 2012. As such, CAF will be used throughout, with the exception of direct quotes where CF has been used, or for formal titles that have not been officially changed.

3 *Canada, Canadian Special Operations Command – 2008* (Ottawa: DND, 2008); and Canada, *CANSOFCOM Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2009* (Ottawa: DND, 2009), 8.

4 The literal translation is small war. European understanding of ‘petite guerre’ is “carried on by a light party, commanded by an expert partisan ... separated from the army, to secure the camp or a march; to reconnoiter the enemy or the country; to seize their posts, convoys and escorts; to plant ambushes, and to put in practice every stratagem for surprising or disturbing the enemy.” M. Pouchot, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (originally Yverdon, 1781 – reprint Youngstown, NY: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), 242.

5 See Bernd Horn, “La Petite Guerre: A Strategy of Survival,” in B. Horn, ed. *The Canadian Way of War. Serving the National Interest* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2006), 21-56; Bernd Horn, “Marin and Langy – Master Practitioners of la petite guerre,” in B. Horn and Roch Legault, eds., *Loyal Service: Perspectives of French-Canadian Military Leaders* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2007), 53-86; Bernd Horn, “Only for the Strong of Heart: Ranging and the Practice of La Petite Guerre During the Struggle for North America,” in B. Horn, ed., *Show No Fear: Daring Actions in Canadian Military History* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2008), 17-64; and B. Horn, “Terror on the Frontier: The Role of the Indians in the Struggle for North America,” in B. Horn, ed. *Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience* (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishers, 2002), 43-64.

6 With a population of only 60,000, New France faced the danger of being engulfed by its larger neighbor to the south, namely the English colonies that numbered approximately 1,500,000. The scale of the threat was enormous. During the French and Indian War, the English colonies outnumbered New France in manpower by nearly 25 to one. George F. Stanley, *Canada’s Soldiers. The Military History of an Unmilitary People* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1960), 61; W.J. Eccles, “The French forces in North America during the Seven Years’ War,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [henceforth DCB], Vol. III, 1741 to 1770 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), xx; Robert Leckie, *A Few Acres of Snow – The Saga of the French and Indian Wars* (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1999), 103; and A. Doughty, *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, Vol I* (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 158.

7 Impartial Hand. *The Contest in America Between Great Britain and France with Its Consequences and Importance* (London: Strand, 1757), 128. The writer also notes that the Natives and Canadians who travel without baggage, support themselves with stores and magazines and who maintain themselves in the woods “do more execution ... than four or five times their number of our men.” Ibid., 138. See also W.J. Eccles, *The French in North America 1500-1783* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1998), 208; Edward P. Hamilton, ed., *Adventures in the Wilderness. The American Journals of Louis*

Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760 (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 333; and M. Pouchot, *Memoirs on the Late War in North America between France and England* (originally Yverdon, 1781 – reprint Youngstown, NY: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), 78.

8 Walter O'Meara, *Guns at the Forks* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1965), 85. See also Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats. British Soldiers and War in the Americas, 1755-63* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2002); and Ian K. Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969).

9 "Memoir on the Defense of the Fort of Carillon," *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*, Vol.13, No. 3 (1972): 200-201; Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals. Fort William Henry & the Massacre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 96; and Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 187.

10 The deep strikes into English territory during the Seven Year's War consistently disrupted British campaign plans and kept them on the defensive from the summer of 1755 until 1758. Moreover, it ravaged frontier settlements, economies and public morale. The raids terrorized the frontier and tied down large numbers of troops for rear security. The plight of the English colonists could not be ignored by their political leaders. The incursions into Virginia alone caused the governor there to raise 10 militia companies, a total of 1,000 men, for internal defence. Similarly, Pennsylvania raised 1,500 provincial troops and built a string of forts extending from New Jersey to Maryland in an attempt to try and impede the raiders. See Letter from General Shirley to Major-General Abercromby, 27 June 1756, National Archives (NA), War Office (WO) 1/4, Correspondence, 1755-1763. See also Robert C. Alberts, *The Most Extraordinary Adventures of Major Robert Stobo* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 1965), 152. See also Anderson, 637; Leckie, 101; Letter From William Shirley (New York) to Principal Secretary of War, 20 December 1755, PRO, WO 1/4, Correspondence, 1755-1763; H.R. Casgrain, ed., *Lettres du Chevalier De Lévis concernant La Guerre du Canada 1756-1760* (Montreal: C.O. Beauchemin & Fils, 1889), 75; Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers*, 24; Le Comte Gabriel de Maurès de Malartic, *Journal des Campagnes au Canada de 1755 à 1760* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1902), 52-53; 232; and O'Meara, 161.

11 *DCB, Vol. III*, 260.

12 *Ibid.*, 261.

13 *DCB, Vol. IV, 1771-1800* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1979), 308.

14 Rogers was a smuggler prior to the war. On Robert Rogers and his rangers the definitive work is Burt G. Loescher, *The History of Rogers Rangers. Volume I - The Beginnings Jan 1755 - 6 April 1758* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., (1946) reprint 2001) and *Genesis Rogers Rangers. Volume II - The First Green Berets* (San Mateo, California, 1969 – reprint Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 2000). See also John R. Cuneo, *Robert Rogers of the Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959); *DCB, Vol. IV, 1771-1800*, 679-682; Timothy J. Todish, *The Annotated and Illustrated Journals of Major Robert Rogers* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2002); and *Warfare on the Colonial American Frontier: The Journals of Major Robert Rogers [Journals of Major Robert Rogers] & An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in the year 1764, Under the Command of Henry Bouquet, Esq.* (Reprinted from an original 1769 Edition – Bargersville, IN: Dreslar Publishing, 2001).

15 Cuneo, *Robert Rogers of the Rangers*, 33.

16 See *Rogers' Journal*, 13-14; Loescher, Vol. 1, 63-64 and 87; Brumwell, 213; and Cuneo, 32-33.

17 Cited in René Chartrand, *Canadian Military Heritage, Vol. II, 1000-1754* (Montreal: Art Global Inc., 1993), 49; and Letter, Thomas Gage to Amherst, Albany, 18 February 1759. National Archives (NA), WO 34/46A, Amherst Papers.

18 See DCB, Vol. IV, 308; and Chartrand, *Canadian Military Heritage*, Vol. II, 49.

19 Ironically, despite the apparent utility and arguable success of rangers, as well as the constant calls for their employment, they never became fully accepted by their professional counterparts. During the war they were never taken on to the official strength of the British Army. Moreover, their lax discipline, disheveled if not unruly appearance, as well as their manner of war-making was simply unacceptable to most British officers. "I am afraid," lamented Lord Loudoun, "[that] I shall be blamed for the ranging companies." Quoted in Burt Garfield Loescher, *The History of Rogers Rangers. Volume I - The Beginnings Jan 1755 -April 1758* (Bowie, Maryland: HeritageBooks, Inc., (1946) reprint 2001), 164.

20 The last of the British troops were evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk on 2 June 1940. 53,000 French troops were evacuated 3-4 June. The British Admiralty estimated that approximately 338,226 men were evacuated between 26 May and 3 June. The British left behind 2,000 guns, 60,000 trucks, 76,000 tons of ammunition and 600,000 tons of fuel and supplies. Cesare Salmaggi and Alfredo Pallavisini, *2194 Days of War* (New York: Gallery Books, 1988), 4 June 1940; and I.C.R. Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 312-313. Another account gives the losses as 475 tanks, 38,000 vehicles, 12,000 motorcycles, 8,000 telephones, 1,855 wireless sets, 7,000 tonnes of ammunition, 90,000 rifles, 1,000 heavy guns, 2,000 tractors, 8,000 Bren guns and 400 anti-tank guns. On 6 June the War Cabinet was informed that there were fewer than 600,000 rifles and only 12,000 Bren guns in the whole of the UK. John Parker, *Commandos. The Inside Story of Britain's Most Elite Fighting Force* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2000), 15. Yet, another source gives the losses as: stores and equipment for 500,000 men, about 100 tanks, 2,000 other vehicles, 600 guns, and large stocks of ammunition. A.J. Barker, *Dunkirk: The Great Escape* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1977), 224. A major problem with determining numbers is the actual categorization of equipment.

21 Cecil Aspinall-Oglander, *Roger Keyes. Being the Biography of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes of Zeebrugge and Dover* (London: Hogarth Press, 1951), 380.

22 Ibid., 380.

23 Cited in John Terraine, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten* (London: Arrow Books, 1980), 83.

24 Hilary St. George Saunders, *The Green Beret. The Story of the Commandos* (London: Michael Joseph, 1956), 118.

25 Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 246-247. See also Colonel J.W. Hackett, "The Employment of Special Forces," *Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*, Vol. 97, No. 585 (February 1952): 28. Churchill later penned a note to President Franklin D. Roosevelt that revealed his mind set. "[The] essence of defence," he asserted, "is to attack the enemy upon us - leap at his throat and keep the grip until the life is out of him." Cited in William Stevenson, *A Man Called Intrepid* (Guilford, Connecticut: The Lyons Press, 2000), 131.

26 William Mackenzie, *The Secret History of SOE* (London: St Ermin's Press, 2000), xvii.

27 Ibid., 754. The SOE operated worldwide with the exception of the Soviet Union. It consisted of two branches - one to provide facilities (i.e. money, clothing, forged papers, training, weapons, ciphers and signals), the other to execute missions.

28 For a detailed history of the SOE and the Canadian nexus see Colonel (Retired) Bernd Horn, *A Very Ungentlemanly Way of War: The SOE and the Canadian Connection* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2017).

29 Denis Riggan, *SOE Syllabus. Lessons in Ungentlemanly Warfare, WWII* (London: Public Records Office, 2001), 1.

30 Ibid., 11. Once the U.S. was in the war the second function became the most important. Camp X and its staff assisted large numbers of Americans from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the Office of War Information to set up their own schools and train their own staff. The OSS was created in June 1942. It functioned as the principal U.S. intelligence organization in all theatres for remainder of WWII. It was the counterpart to British intelligence service MI6 and the SOE. See also Lynn-Philip Hodgson, *Inside Camp X* (Port Perry, ON: Blake Book Distribution, 2000).

31 Roy MacLaren, *Canadians Behind Enemy Lines, 1939-1945* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 150, 172, 199-200. Approximately 3,226 personnel including all services and civilian employees were employed in the SOE by 1942. By 30 April 1944, the total strength rose to 11,752. Mackenzie, 717-719.

32 Quoted in Peter Wilkinson and Joan Bright Astley, *Gubbins & SOE* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), i. The SOE disbanded in January 1946.

33 "The Value of SOE Operations in the Supreme Commander's Sphere," 7. NA, AIR / 20/ 7958.

34 *Combined Operations. The Official Story of the Commandos* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), 16; and Aspinall-Oglander, 381.

35 "Hand-out to Press Party Visiting The Commando Depot Achnacarry, 9-12 January 1943," 2. NA, DEFE 2/5, War Diary COC.

36 Brigadier T.B.L. Churchill, "The Value of Commandos," *RUSI*, Vol. 65, No. 577 (February 1950): 85.

37 Charles Messenger, *The Commandos 1940-1946* (London: William Kimber, 1985), 411. For a detailed account of the British raiding policy and the creation of the commandos see Bernd Horn, "Strength Born From Weakness: The Establishment of the Raiding Concept and the British Commandos," *Canadian Military Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Autumn 2005): 59-68.

38 Lieutenant-General B.L. Montgomery, "Corps Commander's Personal Memoranda to Commanders," 1 November 1941. DND Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), File 145.3009 (D5), Org and admin correspondence, Jul 42/Dec 44. Montgomery also directed, "Initially the objects of such raids, in order of priority, will be:

- (a) To bring back German prisoners, alive if possible.
- (b) To obtain information regarding the nature of the enemy's coastal defences.
- (c) To inflict casualties and damage.

Memorandum, "Corps Commander's Personal Memoranda to Commanders," 1 November 1941. DHH, File 145.3009 (D5) Organization and Administrative Correspondence, Jul 42/Dec 44.

39 George Kerr, "Viking Force. Canada's Unknown Commandos," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Autumn 2000): 28.

40 Ibid., 28.

41 Memorandum, "Corps Commander's Personal Memoranda to Commanders," 1 November 1941. DHH, File 145.3009 (D5) Organization and Administrative Correspondence, Jul 42/Dec 44. Moreover, Montgomery did not feel it was necessary to wait until access to naval assets was available. He felt that the training could be undertaken in the division using a "lorry to take the patrol to unfamiliar ground which has been previously studied on the map or air photograph." Ibid.

42 Kerr, 29.

43 In December 1940, the commandos were renamed Special Service Units. However, by February 1941 the Special Service Units were split up and commandos, as independent units, emerged once

again. This shift was a result of the decision to deploy a number of commandos to the Middle East. Nonetheless, the eleven commandos which existed were grouped in a Special Service (SS) Brigade. The SS Brigade's primary mission remained that of carrying out raids. However, it was also given the secondary tasks of acting as an elite or shock assault brigade to seize and hold a bridgehead to cover a landing in force, as well as providing especially trained covering forces for any operation. "Organization and Training of British Commandos," Intelligence Training Bulletin No. 3, Headquarters First Special Service Force (FSSF), 11 November 1942, 2. DHH, file 145.3009 (D5), Organization and Instructions for the 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion, July 1944-December 1944.

44 Brigadier Ganong observed, "while not disparaging the Commandos, whom they found to be a good efficient lot of fellows, our boys and particularly the officers, feel that Canadian troops would be a great deal better, with anywhere near the same amount of training." Brigadier H.N. Ganong, "Command Raid Night 21/22 April 1942 - Special Report as Requested by Army Commander," 23 April 1942. Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 24, Vol. 10759, File 222C1 (D21), Raids on French Coast 1941-42.

45 Kerr, 30.

46 Ibid., 33.

47 The ill-fated Dieppe Raid led to recriminations of callousness, incompetence, negligence and security violations. The original raid, code named Rutter, was cancelled on 7 July 1942 because of bad weather. Mountbatten later resurrected it, under questionable authority, under the code name Jubilee on 19 August. In total, 4,963 Canadians, 1,075 British and 50 American Rangers took part. In short, a lack of adequate air support and naval gunfire (due to the absence of battleships), as well as the failure of the armour to gain lodgement, compounded by communication errors, the very narrow channelled approaches over open ground for the assaulting forces and the strong German fortifications, led to an unmitigated disaster. The Canadians suffered 3,367 (killed, wounded or captured) casualties of the 4,963 that participated. The British casualties amounted to 275. The Royal Navy lost one destroyer and 33 landing craft and the RAF lost 106 aircraft. An official report assessed: "During Operation Jubilee actual casualties of those who landed was 50 percent. The beach assault parties suffered 85 percent losses. Armoured Fighting Vehicle losses were 100 percent." Memorandum, "Operation Jubilee," 21 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, Vol. 10759, File 222C1 (D21), Raids on French Coast 1941-42. See also Brian Loring Villa, *Mountbatten and the Dieppe Raid* (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 1994); Brigadier-General Denis Whitaker and Shelagh Whitaker, *Dieppe - Tragedy to Triumph* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1992); and Will Fowler, *The Commandos At Dieppe: Rehearsal for D-Day* (London: Harper-Collins, 2002).

48 E.G. Finley, *RCN Beach Commando 'W'* (Ottawa: Gilmour Reproductions, 1994), 1.

49 Ibid., 2. It is divided into three beach parties each commanded by a beach master. Due to the arduous requirements of employment special medical requirements (relative to those imposed on other RCN volunteers) were imposed on volunteers:

1. Under 35 years of age;
2. Mental stability, with no family history of mental disease or disorder;
3. No history of chronic illness (e.g. bronchitis, asthma, TB, rheumatism, arthritis, heart, ear);
4. Standard visual acuity and hearing; and
5. Free from VD.

50 Ibid., viii-5.

51 The conceptual model for selection was such that one journalist quipped, “You’ve practically got to be Superman’s 21C in order to get in.” “Canada’s Jumping Jacks!” *Khaki. The Army Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 22, 29 September 1943, 1. For a detailed examination of 1 Cdn Para Bn see Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, *Canadian Airborne Forces since 1942* (London: Osprey, 2006); B. Horn and M. Wyczynski, *Paras Versus the Reich. Canada’s Paratroopers at War, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2003); B. Horn and M. Wyczynski, *Tip of the Spear - An Intimate Portrait of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2002); and B. Horn and M. Wyczynski, *In Search of Pegasus - The Canadian Airborne Experience, 1942 - 1999* (St Catharines: Vanwell Publishing, 2000).

52 Robert Taylor, “Paratroop Van Eager to be Tip of Army ‘Dagger,’” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 August 1942. 1 Cdn Para Bn Assn Archives, Lockyer, Mark, file 10-3.

53 James C. Anderson, “Tough, Hard-As-Nails Paratroopers Arrive to Open Shilo School,” 22 September 1942, 1. Cdn Para Bn Assn Archives, Firlotte, Robert, file 2-11; “Toughest in Canada’s Army Back for Paratroop Course,” *The Star*, 21 September 1942. 1 Cdn Para Bn Assn Archives, Firlotte, Robert, file 2-11; and Ronald K Keith, “Sky Troops,” *Maclean’s Magazine*, 1 August 1943, 18-20 & 28. This is simply a representative sample. Virtually every article in newspapers nationwide used similar adjectives to describe Canada’s “newest corps elite.” See also, “Assembling Paratroopers at Calgary,” *Globe and Mail*, Vol. XCIX, No. 28916, 18 August 1942, 13. LAC, microfilm N-20035; and Robert Taylor, “Paratroop Van Eager to be Tip of Army ‘Dagger,’” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 August 1942. 1 Cdn Para Bn Assn Archives, Lockyer, Mark, file 10-3.

54 “Assembling Paratroopers at Calgary,” *Globe and Mail*, Vol. XCIX, No. 28916, 18 August 1942, 13. LAC, microfilm N-20035; and Robert Taylor, “Paratroop Van Eager to be Tip of Army ‘Dagger,’” *Toronto Daily Star*, 12 August 1942. 1 Cdn Para Bn Assn Archives, Lockyer, Mark, file 10-3.

55 “Assembling Paratroopers At Calgary,” *Globe and Mail*, Vol. XCIX, No. 28916, 18 August 1942, 13. LAC, microfilm N-20035.

56 James C. Anderson, “Canada’s Paratroopers Don’t Have Stage Fright,” *Saturday Night*, No. 11, 12 December 1942, 11. LAC, microfilm 56A.

57 2 Cdn Para Bn was the higher priority of the two units. National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) directed the commanding officer of 1 Cdn Para Bn to transfer all jump qualified personnel who volunteered to 2 Cdn Para Bn. The rumour that 1 Cdn Para Bn’s supposed sister unit would see action before they would quickly circulated through the ranks of 1 Cdn Para Bn. Predictably, many of the aggressive and action-seeking paratroopers transferred to 2 Cdn Para Bn.

58 The definitive history on the FSSF is Colonel Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, *Of Courage and Determination. The First Special Service Force, The Devil’s Brigade, 1942-1944* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2013). See also Lieutenant-Colonel Robert D. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force. A War History of the North Americans 1942-1944* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1996). He was the FSSF S2 (intelligence officer). In addition, see Major J.W. Ostiguy, Army Historical Section, “The First Special Service Force,” 14 March 1951, 1, DHH, file 145.3003 (D1); Joseph A. Springer, *The Black Devil Brigade. The True Story of the First Special Service Force in World War II* (Pacifica, CA: Military History, 2001); Robert Todd Ross, *The Supercommandos. First Special Service Force - 1942-1944* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 2000); Colonel George Walton, *The Devil’s Brigade* (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1966); and James A. Wood, *We Move Only Forward. Canada, the United States and the First Special Service Force 1942-1944* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell, 2006).

59 Norway represented an important source of scarce ores vital to the war effort. For example, Norwegian molybdenum was an important steel-hardening alloy and it represented 70 percent of

the German supply, 95 percent of which came from deposits from the Knaben mine in the south of Norway. In addition, Finnish nickel refined in Norway represented 70 percent of the German intake; Norwegian aluminum and copper 8 percent respectively.

60 The Rumanian and Italian missions were quickly ruled out. In the case of Rumania, approximately three million tons of oil was annually supplied to the Axis powers. The oil emanated from approximately 5,000 oil wells clustered in various fields within a 50 mile radius of Ploesti. The magnitude of the objective and the manpower required to effectively neutralize the target (i.e. thousands of wells) particularly in light of the heavy defences in the area proved no less resource intensive than using a strategic bombing campaign. Therefore, these factors combined with the fact that there was no reasonable extraction plan for the raiding force, it was dropped as a possible target. The Italian option was no less problematic. This hydro-electric capacity was concentrated in only 12 power stations, but, they extended along the northern Po River watershed from the French border to across Italy. More importantly, the actual impact of a temporary stoppage on the German war effort would be minimal.

61 The actual breakdown of the 697 was: *Colonel (2i/c) - 1; Lieutenant-Colonels or Majors - 4; Majors or Captains - 6; Lieutenants - 36; Other Ranks - 650*. Message from Canadian Military Attaché to Defensor, Washington, 16 July 1942. LAC, RG 24, file HQS 20-4-32, Mobilization and Organization, (Vol 1), Plough Project, (1 CSSBN). Microfilm reel C-5436.

62 Letter from Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Drury, Assistant Military Attaché, Canadian Legation, Washington to the Directorate of Military Operations & Intelligence, NDHQ, Washington, 7 July 1942. LAC, RG 24, Vol. 15301, 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion, [Hereafter 1 CSSBN] War Diary, August 1942.

63 The average age of the Forcemen between July 1942 and December 1943 was 26 years old. This age was considerably higher than in other U.S. Army units. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Adams, the Force's executive officer, later pointed out that this was a very important factor in the Force's cohesion and maturity. Major Scott R. McMichael, "The First Special Service Force," in *A Historical Perspective on Light Infantry*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, Research Survey No. 6, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1987), 172.

64 Ross Munro, "Albertan Second in Command Of Allies' Super-Commandos," Unidentified Canadian newspaper clipping, 6 August 1942, LAC, RG 24, Vol. 15301, August 1942. 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion, [Hereafter 1 CSSBN] War Diary, Serial 1354, August 1942.

65 Memorandum, CCO to CCHQ, "Plough Scheme," 19 January 1943, NA, DEFE 2/6, COC War Diary.

66 Don Mason, "Air Commandos' Will Strike Hard at Axis," newspaper clipping, unknown publication, 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion War Diary, LAC, RG 24, Vol. 15301, August 1942.

67 Cited in Burhans, 35. See also: Memorandum, McQueen to CGS, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS 20-4-32, "Mobilization Organization (1 Special Service Battalion), Reel C-5436; Message, Canmilitary to Defensor (Stuart to Murchie), GSD 2088, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, CMHQ, Vol 12,305, File 3/Plough/1 "Organization and Operation of Proposed Plough Project."

68 Memorandum, McQueen to CGS, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS 20-4-32, "Mobilization Organization (1 Special Service Battalion), Reel C-5436. See also Message, Canmilitary to Defensor (Stuart to Murchie), GSD 2088, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, CMHQ, Vol. 12,305, File 3/Plough/1 "Organization and Operation of Proposed Plough Project." James Wood, "Matters Canadian" and the Problem with Being Special. Robert T. Frederick on the First Special Service Force," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Autumn 2003): 21.

69 See Message, Military Attache to DEFENSOR, Ottawa, MA1286 16/7, 12 July 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS 20-4-32, Mobilization Organization Plough Project (1st SS Bn), Reel C-5436; “Minutes of Meeting Held at C.O.H.Q. On 4.1.43 To Discuss Long – and Short – Term Policy Regarding Norwegian Operations,” para 4., “Cobblestone Operations,” NA, DEFE 2/6, COC War Diary; Peter Layton Cottingham, *Once Upon A Wartime. A Canadian Who Survived the Devil’s Brigade* (Private Printing, 1996), 49.

70 Letter, Marshall to Pope, “Second Canadian Parachute Battalion,” 17 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS-2-32, Employment and Movement Operations, 1st Special Service Battalion, Reel C-5489.

71 Telegram DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, No. G.S.D. 2088, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS-2-32, Employment and Movement Operations, 1st Special Service Bn.

72 Ibid. Not surprisingly the CGS suggested that McNaughton determine whether the British would welcome the 2nd Parachute Battalion in their Airborne Division, or if he would consider adding it to the First Canadian Army so as to develop options in the event the Americans cancelled their participation.

73 Letter, Marshall to Pope, “Second Canadian Parachute Battalion,” 17 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS-2-32, Employment and Movement Operations, 1st Special Service Battalion, Reel C-5489.

74 Letter, Pope to CGS, “Second Canadian Parachute Battalion,” 20 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS-2-32, Employment and Movement Operations, 1st Special Service Battalion, Reel C-5489. See also Telegram DEFENSOR to CANMILITRY, No. G.S.D. 2088, 8 October 1942. LAC, RG 24, HQS-2-32, Employment and Movement Operations, 1st Special Service Bn.

75 *Minutes of the War Cabinet Committee*, 28 October 1942. LAC, RG 2, Series A-5-B Cabinet War Committee, Minutes and Documents of the Cabinet War Committee, Vol. 11, Meeting no. 201, 28 October 1942, Reel C-4874.

76 The success of the various SOF raids at the onset of the war drove Hitler to extreme reaction. On 18 October 1942, he issued his famous “Commando Order” that directed that “all men operating against German troops in so-called Commando raids in Europe or in Africa are to be annihilated to the last man.” Enemy intelligence summaries bluntly acknowledged that “men selected for this sort of Commando [mission] by the enemy are well trained and equipped for their task.” So incensed was the German dictator by their constant attacks that he ordered them killed “whether they be soldiers in uniform...whether fighting or seeking to escape...even if these individuals on discovery make obvious their intention of giving themselves up as prisoners.” He insisted that “no pardon is on any account to be given.” See 10 Pz Div Circular, “Sabotage and Commando Operations,” 10 January 1943. NA, DEFE 2/6, War Diary, COC; John Parker, *Commandos. The Inside Story of Britain’s Most Elite Fighting Force* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2000), 2-3; and Julian Thompson, *War Behind Enemy Lines* (Washington D.C.: Brassey’s, 2001), 127.

77 Letter, Lieutenant-General McNaughton to Major-General Crerar, 19 August 1941. LAC, RG 24, Vol. 12260, File: 1 Para Tps / 1, Message (G.S. 1647).

78 The school itself faced a tenuous future. Its survival hung in the air pending the final decision on the structure of the post-war army.

79 The JAS / CJATC mission included:

- a. Research in Airportability of Army personnel and equipment;
- b. User Trials of equipment, especially under cold weather conditions;
- c. Limited Development and Assessment of Airborne equipment; and

- d. Training of Paratroop volunteers; training in Airportability of personnel and equipment; training in maintenance of air; advanced training of Glider pilots in exercises with troops; training in some of the uses of light aircraft.

See "The Organization of an Army Air Centre In Canada," 29 November & 27 December 1945. *DHH*, file 168.009 (D45).

80 For a detailed history of the Cdn SAS Coy, see Bernd Horn, "A Military Enigma: The Canadian Special Air Service Company, 1948-49," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Winter 2001): 21-30.

81 "SAS Company - JAS (Army), 13 June 1947. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

82 "SAS Company," 30 October 1947, 4; and "Requested Amendment to Interim Plan - SAR," 11 September 1947. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

83 "SAS Company - JAS (Army), 13 June 1947, Appendix A. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

84 "Special Air Service Company - Implementation Policy," 12 September 1947. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

85 "SAS Company," 30 October 1947 (Air S94), LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

86 "SAS Terms of Reference," 16 April 1948; "Duties of the SAS Coy," 29 January 1948; SAS Coy - Air Training Directive," December 1948. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

87 "SAS Company," 27 October 1948. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

88 Luc Charron, "Loss of a Canadian Hero," *The Maroon Beret*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (August 1999): 28.

89 Interviews with former serving members by author.

90 "Training the Active Force - Airborne and Airtransported Aspects," 7 September 1948. LAC, RG 24, Reel C-8255, File HQS 88-60-2.

91 See Bernd Horn, *Bastard Sons: A Critical Examination of the Canadian Airborne Experience, 1942-1995* (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishers, 2001); George Kitching, *Mud and Green Fields. The Memoirs of Major-General George Kitching* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing Ltd., 1986), 248; "Command, Mobile Striking Force," 21 October 1948. *DHH* 112.3M2 (D369); and Sean Maloney, "The Mobile Striking Force and Continental Defence 1948-1955," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (August 1993): 78.

92 "Special Parachute Force is Planned," *The Gazette*, 7 December 1966, 1.

93 *Special Committee on Defence. Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 21 June 1966, 298-299.

94 Colonel D.H. Rochester, "The Birth of a Regiment," *The Maroon Beret*, 20th Anniversary Issue, 1988, 34.

95 For a definitive history of the Cdn AB Regt see Bernd Horn, *Bastard Sons: A Critical Examination of the Canadian Airborne Experience, 1942-1995* (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishers, 2001).

96 "Formation of the Canadian Airborne Regiment - Activation and Terms of Reference," 15 May 1967, 3.

97 *Ibid.*, 3.

98 *Ibid.*, 2.

99 The official CAF magazine, *Sentinel*, announced the creation of the Cdn AB Regt and underlined its special mandate. It noted, "Some personnel will be trained to carry out deep penetration patrols, while others in all arms of the regiment will be trained in underwater diving techniques. There will be jumpers who specialize in High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) techniques for infiltrations patrols or pathfinder duties.Scattered throughout the Regiment will be soldiers who speak a variety of second languages." Major K.G. Roberts, "Canadian Airborne Regiment," *Sentinel* (June 1968): 2.

100 "Canadian Airborne Regiment - Operational Concept, Annex C" (written by the Cdn AB Regt planning staff) and *CFP 310 (1) - Airborne, Volume 1, The Canadian Airborne Regiment*, 1968, Chapter 1, Sect 2, "Role, Capabilities and Employment."

101 The move and reorganization, however, became a defining moment for the Cdn AB Regt. It signaled nothing short of the organization's eventual demise. Of prime importance, and instrumental to the Regiment's subsequent decline, was the loss of independent formation status. It was now simply an integral part of the newly created SSF. The Cdn AB Regt became nothing more than just another infantry unit, albeit an airborne one. It lost its special exemption from tasking and was now given assignments in the same manner as the other units within the SSF. However, there was a more serious consequence. As the Regiment became defined and viewed as just another infantry unit, its claim on seasoned officers and soldiers was dismissed. Tragically, it lost its preferred manning. It was no longer in the envious position of receiving only experienced and mature leaders and men. Prior to the reorganization all riflemen within the commandos had to be qualified to the rank of corporal. This standard of course meant that those soldiers were generally more mature and experienced. However, after the move to CFB Petawawa, the former pre-requisite was no longer followed. The resultant influx of younger, immature and junior soldiers had an eventual impact on the character and reputation of the Cdn AB Regt. See Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 143-184.

102 The SSF was formerly 2 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (CMBG). It reverted back to 2 CMBG in 1995.

103 Incidents included: the mistreatment of prisoners on several occasions; the alleged unjustified shooting and resultant death of an intruder; and the torture death of an apprehended thief. These occurrences ultimately defined the Airborne's achievements in the public consciousness. For additional details see Horn, *Bastard Sons*, 185-248.

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105 See *Ibid.*, 217-248.

106 Brigadier-General Jim Cox, interview with author, 27 April 2010.

107 See Peter Harclerode, *Secret Soldiers. Special Forces in the War Against Terrorism* (London: Cassell & Co, 2000); Paul de B. Taillon, *The Evolution of Special Forces in Counter-Terrorism* (Westport: Praeger, 2001); Benjamin Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism* (New York: Noonday Press, 1995); Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, *The Terrorists* (New York: Facts on File, 1995); and Brian MacDonald, ed., *Terror* (Toronto: The Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1986).

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109 Macdonald, *Terror*, 48-49; and Stewart Bell, *Cold Terror. How Canada Nurtures and Exports Terrorism Around the World* (Mississauga, ON: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2005), 22-25, 28.

110 Discussion, 21 June 2006, between author and a former lieutenant-governor of Ontario who was a member of the Federal government at the time and in the room during the discussions.

- 111 Bell, *Cold Terror*, 31.
- 112 “Counter-Terrorism: The Role of the RCMP,” *RCMP Gazette*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (1986): 3.
- 113 Hilary Mackenzie, “A Team Against Terror,” *Maclean’s* (26 May 1986): 20.
- 114 Memorandum, DG Secur to DGMPO, 29 November 1988.
- 115 Ibid.
- 116 Between 1994-1999, the CAF was reduced from approximately 90,000 personnel to about 60,000, its civilian staff was cut almost in half, and the annual military budget was slashed by almost \$2.7 billion, representing a 23 percent reduction. At the same time, from 1989 to 2001, the CAF deployed on approximately 67 missions compared to 25 missions during the period 1948-1989. Canada, *Canadian Officership in the 21st Century Detailed Analysis and Strategy for Launching Implementation (Officership 2020)* (Ottawa: DND, March 2001), I-1; and Jack Granatstein, *Canada’s Army* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 382.
- 117 Brigadier-General Ray Romses, the first JTF 2 CO, stated that part of the rationale for the transfer was the government’s emphasis on “economizing how it did business.” As such, with the Cold War over and DND looking for new roles, the Deputy Ministers of the various departments rationalized that the 75 RCMP officers at SERT, who only trained, would be more beneficial doing actual police work, while DND which was effective at training and looking for a new role could do HR/CT. Interview with author, 21 June 2008.
- 118 CANSOFCOM *Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2009*, 13.
- 119 Only 50 candidates were selected from a 1,000 applicants. The anticipated failure rate was 80 percent.
- 120 D. Michael Day, “Canadian Special Operations Forces: In the Beginning,” unpublished paper, 2008.
- 121 Colonel (Retired) Mark Rouleau, presentation at CANSOFCOM Strategic Communications Workshop, 27 August 2014.
- 122 SOF Operator, interview with author, 9 September 2014.
- 123 Colonel (retired) Clyde Russell, interview with author, 21 February 2014.
- 124 SOF Operator, interview with author, 15 November 2016.
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- 126 Organizational culture is defined as the “unconscious yet learned, shared, tacit assumptions on which people base their daily behaviour.” E.H. Schein, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 22.
- 127 Chief Warrant Officer Dan Legault, 27 September 2016.
- 128 SOF officer, interview with author, 7 May 2013.
- 129 *CRS Operational Capability Review Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2)*, 23 July 1999.
- 130 Colonel (retired) Clyde Russell, interview with author, 21 February 2014.
- 131 The creation of the two CJSOTFs was done late 2001. The dividing line between the two CJSOTFs was the east-west highway running from Herat to Kabul.

132 DND News Release NR-04.098, dated 8 December 2004, "Joint Task Force Two Members Receive U.S. Presidential Unit Citation." Direct Action (DA), which are short duration strikes and other precise small-scale offensive actions conducted by special operation forces to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives. Special Reconnaissance (SR), which are missions conducted to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance. These actions complement and refine other collection methods but are normally directed upon extremely significant areas of interest. SSE is a type of direct action operation involving the gathering of intelligence and/or evidence from a specific area or location. SSEs may be conducted in friendly, hostile, denied or politically sensitive territory. SSEs may include the destruction of weapons, munitions or equipment if the aforementioned items cannot be recovered. If there is no reasonable expectation of encountering enemy or hostile forces, SOF would not be required.

133 SOF officer, interview with author, 7 May 2013.

134 Allan Woods, "Canada's elite commandos and the invasion of Afghanistan," *The Star.Com*, <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/afghanmission/article/800296--forged-in-the-fire-of-afghanistan>, accessed 25 April 2010.

135 "Ottawa: Canadian Commandos Were on Afghan Frontlines," http://circ.jmellon.com/docs/html/jtf2_canada_super_commandos.html, accessed 12 March 2004.

136 Ibid.

137 Martin O'Malley, "JTF 2: Canada's Super-Secret Commandos," CBC News, http://circ.jmellon.com/docs/html/jtf2_canada_super_commandos.html, accessed 12 March 2004.

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139 Maddison later became the first CANSOFCOM Honorary Colonel.

140 Vice-Admiral (Retired) Greg Maddison, interview with author, Brussels, 29 May 2013.

141 Ibid.

142 Colonel (retired) Clyde Russell, interview with author, 21 February 2014.

143 Major-General Mike Day, interview with Colonel Bernd Horn, 19 December 2012.

144 Ibid.

145 Colonel (retired) Clyde Russell, interview with author, 21 February 2014.

146 The citation package also provided a brief history of CJSOTF (South):

CJSOTF(S)/ TF K-Bar – in October 2001 in response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 Commander U.S. CENTCOM directed the establishment of a combined joint special operation task force (CJSOTF) to conduct special operations in Southern Afghanistan to destroy, degrade and neutralize Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces. Captain (Navy) Robert Harward, U.S. Navy Commander Naval Special Warfare Group One/Commander TF K-Bar began conducting maritime interception operations in the Arabian Sea. Ground combat operations began on 22 November 2001 when attached units conducted a 96 hour clandestine SR in advance of a United States marine corps (USMC) assault on landing zone (LZ) Rhino in Southern Afghanistan while other units conducted advance force operations,

reconnaissance and assessment of alternate landing zones. On 24 November his Naval Special Warfare Task Force provided terminal guidance for the USMC assault on LZ Rhino. After seizure of LZ Rhino, Captain (Navy) Harward stood up CJSOTF(S) on 26 November and forces conducted a series of SR, DA and SSE missions to detect, apprehend and destroy Taliban and AQ forces. The TF provided critical SR in support of conventional forces during Operation Anaconda in March 2002. From October 2001 to March 2002, CJSOTF-SOUTH conducted 42 SR, 23 DA and SSE missions, directed 147 close air support missions, intercepted and searched 12 ships, apprehended 112 detainees and inflicted over 115 enemy casualties. All at a cost of three friendly casualties – one dead – two wounded.

147 DND News Release NR-04.098, dated 8 December 2004, “Joint Task Force Two Members Receive U.S. Presidential Unit Citation.”

148 DND News Release NR-04.098, dated 8 December 2004, “Joint Task Force Two Members Receive U.S. Presidential Unit Citation.”

149 Canadian Alliance, “Expansion of JTF 2 Dangerous,” 7 February 2002, http://circ.jmellon.com/docs/txt/joint_task_force_2_expansion_dangerous.txt, accessed 12 March 2004.

150 Canada, *Budget 2001 Enhancing Security for Canadians* (Ottawa: Department of Finance, 2001), 18. The budget document specifically stated the need to “double the capacity of Joint Task Force Two – the Canadian Forces’ elite anti-terrorist unit;” and “support Canadian military participation in the international war on terrorism.” Ibid., 5.

151 Colonel (retired) Clyde Russell, interview with author, 25 May 2015.

152 Ibid.

153 DND was in the process of manufacturing NBCD modified Bison armoured personnel carriers and DRDC Suffield were building robots to undertake some of the task as well.

154 The JNBCD Coy hailed from a long line of CBRN units that harken back to the first use of large scale chemical warfare on 22 April 1915. Since that time, Canada has been a leader in CBRN defence. Although the Canadian Army and Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) maintained a focus on CBRN since the First World War, No. 1 Radiation Detection Unit (1RDU) was the nation’s first nuclear biological chemical defence (NBCD) specialist unit. Formed in March 1950, 1RDU pioneered the development of many contemporary CBRN capabilities alongside Canada’s allies. Over a decade of operations, 1RDU conducted domestic response in places such as Chalk River and participated in atomic weapons testing with the United States and the United Kingdom. By 1960, 1RDU was reduced to nil strength and its personnel were passed to the Joint Atomic Biological and Chemical Warfare School (JABCWS), which had been established in Borden, Ontario, in 1949. In 1966, it was re-designated the Canadian Forces Nuclear Biological and Chemical School (CFNBCS), and its instructor cadre represented the only NBC specialists in Canada. In 1976, the CFNBCS began its relationship with the RCMP when it attached a small group of NBC instructors to the RCMP Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) section as part of an integrated response team for the Olympic Games in Montreal. The working relationship continued after the games. Through the 1990s, the RCMP Explosives Disposal and Technology Section (EDTS) assumed the national responsibility for CBRN and a First Responder Training Program was created in close cooperation between the RCMP, CFNBCS, and DRDC scientists.

155 House of Commons, *Facing our Responsibilities. The State of Readiness of the Canadian Forces. Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs*, May 2002, 42.

156 Ambassador Paul Cellucci, Conference of Defence Associates Conference, Ottawa, 7 March 2005.

157 Ibid.

158 General Rick Hillier, *A Soldier First: Bullets, Bureaucrats and the Politics of War* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 2009), 368.

159 Colonel Bernd Horn, *No Ordinary Men. SOF Missions in Afghanistan* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2016), 68.

160 “Talking Points. CF Transformation Initiative,” CDS GO/FO Symposium, Cornwall, February 2005, 3.

161 *Canadian Special Operations Command – 2008*; and *CANSOFCOM Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2009*, 8.

162 Lieutenant-General Mike Day, interview with Colonel Bernd Horn, 19 December 2012.

163 Hillier’s desire to transform the CAF was based on his perception that the CAF had to become more responsive, adaptive and relevant. He declared, “We need to transform the Canadian Forces completely, from a Cold War-oriented, bureaucratic, process-focused organization into a modern, combat-capable force, where the three elements- navy, army and air force, enabled by Special Forces – all worked together as one team to protect Canada by conducting operations effectively at home and abroad. I envisioned a flexible, agile and quick-thinking military that would be able to bring exactly the right kind of forces to accomplish whatever mission they were given, whether it was responding to a natural disaster like a tsunami or an ice storm or fighting a counter-insurgency war in southern Afghanistan.” Hillier, *A Soldier First*, 323.

164 Hillier had directed the term SOG be replaced by CANSOFCOM. It turned out that the French abbreviation for SOG, was GOS, which was also slang for “balls/testicles.”

165 Ministerial Organization Order 2005078.

166 Canada. *Wounded. Canada’s Military and the Legacy of Neglect. Our disappearing Options for Defending the Nation Abroad and at Home*. An Interim Report of the standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence. September 2005, 76.

167 Canada, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the world – defence: Canada’s International Policy Statement* (Ottawa: DND, 2005), 1-32.

168 Canada, *Canadian Special Operations Command – 2008* (Ottawa: DND, 2008); and Canada, *CANSOFCOM Capstone Concept for Special Operations 2009* (Ottawa: DND, 2009), 8.

169 Ibid., 8.

170 Joint Task Force 2 (JTF 2) Web page, <https://www.canada.ca/en/special-operations-forces-command/corporate/organizational-structure/joint-task-force-2.html>, accessed 10 July 2018.

171 CANSOFCOM files, “CTS/DCDS and Background Information,” ND.

172 Ibid.

173 “Speaking Notes for General Rick Hillier, CDS, at the Canadian Special Operations Regiment Stand-Up Ceremony,” 13 August 2006, Petawawa, Ontario.

174 Ibid.

175 The course was later renamed the Special Forces Course (SFC).

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- 177 David Publiese, "Military Forms New Quick Reaction Task Force," *The Ottawa Citizen*, <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Military+forms+quick+reaction+task+force/3290244/story.html>, accessed 18 July 2010.
- 178 Ibid.
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- 181 CANFORGEN 029/08 CDS 002/08, 041846Z Feb 08.
- 182 David Pugliese, "Canadian Forces Make Mark in Afghanistan," *Defence News* (19 May 2008): 18.
- 183 Paul Robinson, "We can't just take them out; It's tempting to simply fire a missile or sniper bullet and be done with suspected terrorist leaders – but it's a lot more complicated than that," *The Ottawa Citizen* (27 May 2008).
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- 185 Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Walker, interview with author, 5 October 2008.
- 186 David Pugliese, "Canadian Forces Make Mark in Afghanistan," *Defence News* (19 May 2008): 18.
- 187 Major-General Mike Rouleau, "Preparing SOF Leaders for the Future," in Dr. Emily Spencer, ed., *In Pursuit of Excellence: SOF leadership in the Contemporary Operating Environment* (Kingston: ERC Press, 2016), 215.
- 188 *BBC News*, "What is Islamic State?" 3 September 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29052144>, accessed 4 September 2014.
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- 190 Erin Mclam, "Obama's U.N. Rallying Cry: World Must Dismantle ISIS 'Network of Death,'" *NBC News*, 24 September 2014, <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/obamas-u-n-rallying-cry-world-must-dismantle-isis-network-n210346>, accessed 24 September 2014.
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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

1 Cdn Para Bn	1 st Canadian Parachute Battalion
2 Cdn Para Bn	2 nd Canadian Parachute Battalion
9/11	11 September 2001
APS	Annual Posting Season
AQ	al-Qaeda
ASALA	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
ATO	Afghanistan Theatre of Operations
BGS	Brigadier-General (Staff)
BSP	Basic Security Plan
C2	Command & Control
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CANOSCOM	Canadian Operational Support Command
CANSOF	Canadian Special Operations Forces
CANSOFCOM	Canadian Special Operations Forces Command
CAT	CDS Action Teams
CBRN	Chemical Biological Radiation Nuclear
CCAT	Contingent Commander's Advisory Team
Cdn AB Regt	Canadian Airborne Regiment
Cdn SAS Coy	Canadian Special Air Service Company
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CEFCOM	Canadian Expeditionary Force Command
CENTCOM	Central Command
CF	Canadian Forces
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CFOO	Canadian Forces Organizational Order

GLOSSARY

CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CJATC	Canadian Joint Air Training Centre
CJIRU	Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit
CJSOTF	Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
CO	Commanding Officer
CP	Counter Proliferation
CPAT	Contingency Planning Assistance Team
CPP	Close Personal Protection
CSOR	Canadian Special Operations Regiment
CSOTC	Canadian Special Operations Training Centre
CT	Counter-Terrorism
CTSO	Counter Terrorism Special Operations
DA	Direct Action
DCDS	Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff
DHH	Directorate of History and Heritage
DND	Department of National Defence
DPS	Defence Policy Statement
DRDC	Defence Research Development Canada
ERC	Education & Research Centre
FLQ	<i>Le Front de Libération du Québec</i>
FMC	Force Mobile Command
FSSF	First Special Service Force
GoC	Government of Canada
GSG 9	<i>Grenzschutzgruppe 9</i>
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HALO	High Altitude Low Opening
HARP	Hostile Assault and Rescue Program

HoM	Head of Mission
HR	Hostage Rescue
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRTF	Immediate Reaction Task Force
IS	Islamic State
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance
ISYF	International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF)
JAS	Joint Air School
JFSOCC	Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command
JLT-A	Joint Liaison Team-Afghanistan
JNBC Coy	Joint Nuclear Biological Chemical Company
JTF 2	Joint Task Force Two
LAC	Library Archives Canada
LFDTs	Land Forces Doctrine and Training System
LIBs	Light Infantry Battalions
MCT	Maritime Counter Terrorism
MND	Minister of National Defence
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NA	National Archives
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
NEO	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OPCON	Operational Control

GLOSSARY

OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCO	Privy Council Office
PHAC	Public Health Agency of Canada
PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry
R22eR	Royal 22 nd Regiment
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
RCR	Royal Canadian Regiment
RN	Royal Navy
RSM	Regimental Sergeant Major
RT	Response Team
SAB	Student Assessment Board
SAH Flt	SERT Assault Helicopter Flight
SAS	Special Air Service
SERT	Special Emergency Reaction Team
SFC	Special Forces Course
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SOA Flt	Special Operations Aviation Flight
SOAR	Special Operations Aviation Regiment
SOAS	Special Operations Aviation Squadron
SOBQ	Special Operations Basic Qualification
SOC	Special Operations Capability
SOCCE	Special Operations Command and Control Element
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOG	Special Operations Group
SOLGEN	Solicitor General
SOTF	Special Operations Task Force

Sqn	Squadron
SR	Special Reconnaissance
SSF	Special Service Force
SSU	Special Service Unit
STS	Special Training School
TB	Treasury Board or Taliban (depending on context)
TD	Temporary Duty
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
UW	Unconventional Warfare
VCDS	Vice Chief of the Defence Staff
VIP	Very Important Person
VSO	Village Security Operations
WTC	World Trade Center
WWII	World War II

INDEX

- 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (1 Cdn Para Bn) 22-27, 38, 45, **144 notes**
- 1st Canadian Special Service Battalion 26, 93, **113 notes, 115 notes**
- 2nd Canadian Parachute Battalion (2 Cdn Para Bn) 26, **114 notes, 115 notes**
- 9/11 (see also 11 September 2001) i, iii, 1, 68, 72, 76-78, **120 notes**
- 11 September 2001 (see also 9/11) iii, 68
- 75th Ranger Regiment 70
- 82nd Airborne Division 70
- 427 Special Operations Aviation Squadron (427 SOAS) 86, 90, 96
- 427 Squadron (427 Sqn) 90, 91, 96
- 2005 Defence Policy Statement* 83
- Afghanistan i, iii, 1, 67-69, 71-81, 83, 85, 93, 95, 96, 98, 100, 104, 105, **120 notes, 122 notes, 123 notes**
- Africa 29, 37, 52, 64, 65, 85, 96, **116 notes**
- Air India Flight 182 59
- Al Qaeda (AQ) 68, 74, **121 notes**
- Allard, Lieutenant-General Jean Victor 46
- Anderson, Lieutenant-General W.A.B. 47
- Annapolis 4
- Anzio 32, 33
- Arisaig 12
- Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) 57, 58
- Arrowhead 93
- Baader-Meinhof Gang 56, 58
- Balkans 10, 65, 85
- Basic Security Plan (BSP) 44, 45
- Beach Commando “W” 20-22, **113 notes**
- Beatty, Perrin 59
- Berlin Wall 55
- Black Devils 32-34
- Bourne, Lieutenant-General Alan 15
- Buck, Vice Admiral Ron 79
- Bush, President George 73
- Cabinet 9, 23, 26, 30, 56-60, 71, **111 notes, 116 notes**
- Camp X (see also Special Training School (STS) 103) 12, **112 notes**
- Canada’s International Policy Statement: A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* 85
- Canadian Airborne Regiment (Cdn AB Regt) iv, 45-53, 62, 64, **114 notes, 117 notes, 118 notes**
- Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) iv, 38, 47, 48, 50, 53, 59-62, 64, 68, 73, 80, 83, 84, 87, 89, 96, 98, 101, 104, **109 notes, 118 notes, 119 notes, 122 notes**
- Canadian Army 23, 27, 45, 46, **116 notes, 121 notes**
- Canadian Corps 15, 18, 19
- Canadian Forces (CF) 47, 57, 63, 74, 77, 78, 83-85, 91, 104, **109 notes, 118 notes, 121-123 notes**
- Canadian Joint Air Training Centre (CJATC) 39, 41, 43, 45, **116 notes**
- Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit (CJIRU) 86, 89, 98, 99
- Canadian Special Air Service Company (Cdn SAS Coy) 38-45, **117 notes**

- Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF)
i, iv, 22, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 95, 97,
98, 100, 104, **119 notes**,
- Canadian Special Operations Forces Command
(CANSOFCOM) i, iv, 72, 83-93, 96, 99-
101, 103-106, **109 notes**, **119 notes**, **120 notes**,
122 notes, **124 notes**
- Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR)
86, 92, 93, 96, 97, **122 notes**
- Canadian Special Operations Training Centre
(CSOTC) 100, 101
- Canadian War Cabinet Committee 23
- CBRN Response Team 77, 89
- CDS Action Teams (CAT) 84
- Cellucci, Paul 79, **121 notes**
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) 68
- Chemical Biological Radiation Nuclear (CBRN)
77, 89, 98, **121 notes**
- Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) iv, 46, 58,
59, 65, 71, 74, 79, 83-87, 93, 95, 103-105,
122 notes, **123 notes**
- Chief of the General Staff (CGS) 30, 40, 45,
115 notes, **116 notes**
- Churchill, Winston 9, 10, 14, 15, 26, **111 notes**,
112 notes
- Close Personal Protection (CPP) 64, 65, 81, 88
- Cold War iv, 37, 55, 60, 106, **119 notes**,
122 notes
- Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force
(North) (CJSOTF (N)) 68
- Combined Joint Special Operations Task
Force (South) (CJSOTF (S)) 69, 70, 73, 74,
120 notes
- Combined Operations Command 15, 26, 28,
29
- Commando Spirit 15
- Commandos iii, 10, 11, 15-18, 20, 21, 27, 28,
35, 43, 46, 49, 97, **111-116 notes**, **118 notes**,
120 notes, **123 notes**
- Contingency Planning Assistance Team
(CPAT) 64
- Contingent Commander's Advisory Team
(CCAT) 64
- Counter-Terrorism Special Operations (CTSO)
cell 86, **122 notes**
- Coureur de bois* 2
- Crerar, Major-General Harry 15, 17, 19,
116 notes
- Culture 37, 58, 62, 64, 66, 67, **119 notes**
- Cyprus 50
- D'Artois, Captain Guy 43
- Daesh (see also Islamic State) 101-104
- Day, Lieutenant-General Mike 62, 72, 79, 84,
93, 104, **112 notes**
- Delta Force 67, 81
- Department of National Defence (DND)
52, 55-58, 60, 61, 73, 77, 104, **109 notes**,
112 notes, **119-122 notes**
- Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) 71,
77, 84, 89, **122 notes**
- Dieppe Raid 18, 20, 22, **113 notes**
- Dill, General Sir John 14
- Dunkirk 9, 10, **111 notes**
- Dwyer Hill Training Centre 61, 62, 72
- Education & Research Centre (ERC) i, 99, 101,
123 notes
- Eisenhower, General Dwight 13
- Elcock, D.M. 79
- First Special Service Force (FSSF) 10, 26-28,
30, 32, 33, 37, 38, 43, 93, **113-115 notes**
- FLQ Crisis (see also October Crisis) 50
- Force Mobile Command (FMC) 46

- Fowler, Bob 60, 62
- Frederick, Colonel Robert T. 27-30, **115 notes**
- French and Indian War 4, **109 notes**
- French-Canadian 1-4, 10, 12, **109 notes**
- Gauthier, Lieutenant-General Michael 104
- Goreham, Captain John 4
- Goreham's Rangers 4, 6
- Graham, Bill 74, 85
- Grenzschutzgruppe 9* (GSG 9) 56
- Gubbins, Brigadier Colin 28
- Gulf War iii
- Haiti 65, 85
- Harward, Admiral Bob 71
- Helena 28, 29
- Hennault, General Ray 74
- Hillier, General Rick iv, 72, 79, 80, 83-87, 92-95, 104, **121-123 notes**
- Hostage Assault and Rescue Program (HARP) 57
- International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) 77, 94
- International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) 58
- Iraq i, 96, 101-104, 106, **123 notes**
- Irish Republican Army (IRA) 56
- Islamic State (see also Daesh) 101, **123 notes**
- Ismay, General Hasting 9, 10
- Jamaica 50, 96
- Johnson, Major-General William 4
- Joint Air School (JAS) 39, 44, **116 notes**, **117 notes**
- Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command (JFSOCC) 68, 74
- Joint Liaison Team-Afghanistan (JLT-A) 77
- Joint Nuclear Biological Chemical Company (JNBC Coy) 77, 86
- Joint Task Force Two (JTF 2) iii, 60-65, 67-81, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90-93, 96, **119-123 notes**
- Kandahar City 95
- La petite guerre* 1, **109 notes**
- Lake Champlain 4, 5
- Le Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) 50, 56
- Libya 101
- M.O. 9 14
- Mackay, Peter 105, **124 notes**
- Maddison, Vice-Admiral Greg 71, 72, **120 notes**
- Marshall, General George 30, **116 notes**
- Martin, Paul 75
- McCool, Major Brian 18, 19
- McNaughton, Major-General A.G.L. 10, 18
- McRaven, Admiral Bill iii
- Metz, Commander Kerry 70
- Minister of National Defence (MND) iii, 23, 46, 52, 57, 74, 75, 85, 96, 105, 106
- MND Award for Operational Excellence 96, 105
- Montana 28-30
- Monte La Difensa 31, 32
- Montgomery, Lieutenant-General Bernard Law 15, 17, 18, **112 notes**
- Morton, Kevin 84
- Mountbatten, Lord Louis 17, 26, 29, **111 notes**, **113 notes**

- Munich Olympics (1972) 56
- Murchie, Major-General George 30, *115 notes*
- Murray, Vice-Admiral Larry **104**, *124 notes*
- Mussolini Canal 32
- National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) 38, 39, 41, 43, 52, 64, 71, 77-79, 86, **114 notes**, **115 notes**
- National Mission Force 88, 89
- Natynczyk, General Walter 104
- Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) 87, 91
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) 37, 38, 101
- Norway 14, 26, 28, 29, **114 notes**, **115 notes**
- Nova Scotia 4
- Nova Scotia Rangers 4
- Occupied Europe 20, 25
- October Crisis (see also FLQ Crisis) 56
- Operation Deliverance 62
- Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 68, 71-73, 76, 78, 79, 81, 93
- Operation Impact 103
- Operation Inherent Resolve 103
- Operation Plough 26, 28
- Operation Rutter 18
- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) 56
- Petawawa 50, 57, 61, 90, **118 notes**, **122 notes**
- Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) 43, 45
- Privy Council Office (PCO) 56
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) 77
- Ranger Tradition iv, 1, 6, 9, 106
- Red Army Faction 56, 58
- Rochester, Colonel Don 46, **117 notes**
- Rogers, Major Robert 4-6, **110 notes**
- Rogers' Rangers 4, 6, 7, **110 notes**, **111 notes**
- Rome 32
- Romses, Lieutenant-Colonel Ray 62, 64, **119 notes**
- Rouleau, Mike 84, **119 notes**, **123 notes**
- Royal 22nd Regiment (R22eR) 43, 45
- Royal Air Force (RAF) 13, 28, **113 notes**
- Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) 13, 39, 41
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) iv, 56-62, 64, 67, 77, 90, **119 notes**, **121 notes**
- Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) 20-22, **113 notes**
- Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) 43, 45
- Royal Marines 15
- Royal Navy (RN) 20, **113 notes**
- Royal Navy Beach Parties 20, **113 notes**
- Russell, Colonel Clyde 68, 72, 73, **119-121 notes**
- Secretary of the Navy, Presidential Unit Citation 73
- SERT Assault Helicopter Flight (SAH Flt) 90
- Shirley, Major-General William 4, 5
- Simonds, Brigadier Guy 17, 18
- SOF Power iii
- Solicitor General (SOLGEN) 56-60
- Somalia 51, 56, 62, 71
- Special Air Service (SAS) 10, 38-41, 43-45, 47, 50, 53, 57, 67, 72, 81, **117 notes**
- Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) iv, 55, 59-62, 64, 67, 90, **119 notes**

- Special Operations i, iii iv, 1, 9, 10, 30, 34, 37, 39, 45, 48, 49, 53, 64, 65, 67-70, 72-74, 78, 79, 83-88, 90, 92, 94, 100, 106, **109 notes**, **119 notes**, **120 notes**, **122 notes**
- Special Operations Executive (SOE) 10-14, 29, 29, 37, 38, 43, 45, **111 notes**, **112 notes**
- Special Operations Forces (SOF) i, iii, iv, 1, 9-11, 15, 17, 20, 22, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37-39, 44, 45, 53, 64, 65, 67-73, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, 84, 87, 89, 91-96, 99, 104, **116 notes**, **119 notes**, **120 notes**, **122 notes**, **123 notes**
- Special Operations Group (SOG) 79, 83, 85, **122 notes**
- Special Service Unit (SSU) 91, 92, **112 notes**
- Special Training School 103 (STS 103) 12
- Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) 13
- Taliban 68, 70, 74, 75, 80, 94, 95, **120 notes**, **121 notes**, **123 notes**
- Task Force Dagger 68
- Task Force K-Bar 69, 70, 73
- Terrorism 55, 56, 58, 60, 61, 66, 72, 74-76, 79, 80, 85-89, 91, 96, 106, **118 notes**, **119 notes**, **121 notes**
- Transformation iv, 83, 84, 86, 87, **122 notes**
- Treasury Board (TB) 57, 61
- Turkish Embassy 58
- Unconventional Warfare (UW) 33, 74
- United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) iii
- U.S. Special Forces Centre 47
- Vice Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) 79
- Viking Force 14, 15, 17-20, **112 notes**
- Village Stability Operations (VSO) 97
- Villeneuve-Loubet 33
- War Office 14, 29, **110 notes**
- World Trade Center (WTC) iii, 68
- World War II (WWII) 9, 15, 22, 37, **111 notes**, **114 notes**

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Historically, Special Operations Forces (SOF) have been largely in the shadows, not only by the nature of what they do, but also because the conventional military never really accepted them as a mainstream capability. This changed dramatically in the post-9/11 era due to the employment of SOF in the war on terror in Afghanistan, Iraq and throughout the globe. This shift into the light has been exemplified in the Canadian experience. While, importantly, this nation has conducted “special operations” since its inception, many, if not most, Canadians remain unaware of this rich history. *We Will Find a Way: The Canadian Special Operations Legacy* addresses this deficit by providing a historical glimpse of Canada’s special operations experience and, in so doing, helps to expose the foundation of contemporary special operations which are rooted in the achievements of the individuals and organizations that paved their way.

