From the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute's Research Files:

NEITHER ART, NOR SCIENCE - Selected Canadian Military Leadership Profiles

Edited by
Colonel Bernd Horn & Craig L. Mantle

VOLUME 2

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FOREWORD

Every conflict is different. Over the course of the last few hundred years, Canada has committed forces to numerous wars and conflicts, such deployments being in support of the British Empire, our own national aims, or attempts to further international peace and security under the flag of the United Nations. The purpose, mandate and challenges of each have rarely, if ever, been the same. And so, in like manner, the leaders of Canada's forces at all levels have also differed in terms of their personality, leadership style, military background and, importantly, their competence.

It is for this reason that I commend to you *Neither Art, nor Science – Selected Canadian Military Leadership Profiles*. This excellent book will be of use to all who are interested in Canada's past, and more specifically, in the soldiers, sailors and air personnel who shaped that past and influenced the present. *Neither Art, nor Science* offers a glimpse into the lives of certain individuals, some well-known, others less so, who were responsible for leading Canada's men and women into danger, always under very difficult and trying circumstances.

By understanding them as commanders and leaders, and by examining both their successes and failures, we will gain a greater appreciation of their accomplishments in the face of adversity. In many respects, *Neither Art, nor Science* is a primer on command and leadership for it offers valuable lessons to all members of today's Canadian Forces, lessons that should inspire, motivate and reinforce the tremendous responsibility that we as leaders shoulder daily.

J. P. P. J. Lacroix
Brigadier-General
Commandant
Royal Military College of Canada

INTRODUCTION

Leadership at times seems to be a very ethereal concept. Despite intellectual, theoretical, scholarly and doctrinal definitions, in practice, leadership has many different faces. Compounding its complexity is the fact that leadership often is not a stand alone dynamic. It is complicated by other oft-misunderstood terms and concepts such as command, authority and management. This is not surprising since in military practice, all are closely interrelated. Often, many of the terms, particularly leadership and command, are actually confused, if not interchanged. In fact, leadership is frequently subsumed by the larger function of command. Therefore, prior to discussing military commanders and leaders, it is advantageous to clarify terminology if for no other reason than to provide a common departure point for this book.

As such, the concept of command seems like an appropriate place to begin since this volume of profiles examines military personnel, particularly commanders. In addition, command acts as a shell that embraces the other concepts and terms. Important to understand is the idea that command is not an arbitrary activity for it can only be exercised by those who are formally appointed to positions of command. Command is generally accepted to refer to "the authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, co-ordination, and control of military forces."[1]

In essence, command is the purposeful exercise of authority over structures, resources, people and activities. Clearly, the aim of the commander is to achieve mission success. As a result, he or she must lead, plan, direct, motivate, allocate resources, supervise and discipline their charges. Undeniably, command is a complex function. That is why it actually comprises three, often reinforcing components. They are: authority (i.e. the power or right to enforce obedience); management (e.g. allocating resources, budgeting, coordinating, controlling, organizing, planning, prioritis-

ing, problem solving, supervising and ensuring adherence to policy and timelines); and, leadership (i.e. "directing, motivating and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically, while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success").[2] Depending on the mission, subordinates, circumstances and situations, as well as the respective commander, different emphasis is placed on the different components.

One important differentiation, however, must be made. As noted earlier, only those who are appointed to such positions can exercise command. Conversely, leadership, although a vital component of command, also exists outside of the concept of command. It can be exercised by anyone, regardless of rank or position. Individuals anywhere in the chain of command may provide leadership, and as a result, given their ability and motivation, can influence peers and even superiors.

This short contextual and theoretical backdrop is designed to provide a filter through which to view the subsequent chapters. However, no template for measuring command and leadership as practiced by individuals is proposed, as the actual practice is as varied as the definitions used to define the terms. Command and leadership truly are personal endeavours that speak as much to the respective personalities and characters of those undertaking the actions as it does to the concepts themselves. Neither art nor science, command and leadership are a blend of the two – forged by character, experience, education, training and situational factors.

So why study personal command and leadership profiles? If each person is different, is there value in studying others, particularly in the context of their unique period in history? These of course are rhetorical questions. The answer undoubtedly is a resounding "yes". Whether a good or bad example, there are elements to command and leadership that transcend both time and place. In addition, although circumstances and situations change, similarly, there are common threads in conflict, particularly combat (e.g. courage, fear, confusion, motivation, friction, communication) that

also recur. As such, the opportunity to learn from others, or at least to consider their reactions, solutions or considerations, provides vicarious experience. At a minimum, these case studies provide some insight into alternate approaches. Faced with crises or similar dilemmas in the future, others, particularly neophyte commanders, can use these examples to build a repertoire of possible courses of action that they might consider following.

Equally, understanding what other commanders and leaders have gone through may provide moral support and encouragement, knowing that the fear, self-doubt, or any number of challenges, are not unique nor a function of an individual's personal situation. Sometimes knowing what one is experiencing is normal helps. Moreover, a study of other commanders and leaders importantly prepares individuals for what they can expect to encounter in the field.

It is for these varied reasons that the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI) has embarked on yet another volume of leadership profiles. Spanning the period from the First World War to peace support operations in the 1990s, this book provides insight into a number of colourful and courageous commanders and leaders who brought their character to bear and, despite exercising command and/or leadership in different ways, managed to achieve mission success. Whether you agree with their approach or not, all have something to teach.

This volume begins with a look at Sir Edwin Alderson, the first and perhaps least known commander of the Canadian Corps during the First World War. Tom Leppard argues that political intrigue prematurely ended the career of the "Gentleman Soldier" in France. An efficient organizer and administrator, however, Alderson transformed Canada's rag-tag volunteers into an effective fighting formation that would, under the guidance of subsequent commanders, be refined even further into one of the best on the Western Front. A brave leader with considerable experience in the British Army, Alderson's legacy to the Canadian war effort

was one of preparation and training for he laid the groundwork for others to successfully build upon. Although greatly interested in the welfare of his men, his unwillingness (or inability) to learn and adapt to changing conditions at the front, so it is argued, contributed in part to his downfall. This chapter suggests that those who rely solely upon traditional thinking in the face of change are likely to encounter professional difficulties as the world around them moves forward, leaving them well behind.

Keeping with the First World War, Lieutenant-Colonel Rob Williams discusses in Chapter 2 the reasons behind the success of the 85th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, during its attack at Vimy Ridge in April 1917. While not necessarily a study of any one particular individual per se, although certain officers are commended for their valour, perceptiveness and dedication, he argues forcefully that realistic training and preparation, competent leadership, the building of trust and proper communication between all concerned – essentially some of the requirements for success on today's modern battlefield – were the determining factors in ensuring victory against incredible odds. This case study is truly inspirational, for it demonstrates what can be done in the face of adversity, given that leaders are prepared to shoulder the awesome responsibility of preparing their subordinates in all respects for the fight ahead. In this chapter especially, the timeless nature of leadership is more than evident.

In transitioning from the First to the Second World War, Richard Goette analyzes in Chapter 3 the leadership abilities of William "Billy" Bishop, one of Canada's greatest and most controversial fighter aces. Being an individualist by nature, Bishop led bravely by example, aggressively pursuing the enemy on his own. Although technically competent and possessing an innate ability to anticipate the outcome of probable events in the air, his particular style of leadership was not well-suited to those situations that demanded cooperation and teamwork. In frequently abandoning his fellow pilots to chase after targets of opportunity, Bishop put those whom he was supposed to protect and assist in

grave danger. By relying on his reputation and boyish personality, he was able to mould his pilots into a cohesive whole during training, but, when it mattered the most, his unwillingness to fight alongside his fellow officers destroyed much of the morale and goodwill that had earlier been forged. Because of his desire to fight his own war on his own terms, Bishop does not fit the ideal image of a leader or commander.

In Chapter 4, Goette continues his study of leadership in the air by examining the all too short career of Squadron Leader N.E. "Molly" Small. In comparison to the individualistic Bishop, Small was very much a team player, always trying his best to improve the efficiency of the squadron under his command, and indeed, that of the larger organization to which he belonged. Never one to sit back, he took the initiative and capitalized upon innovation, some of which was entirely of his own making. A dynamic leader who could think "outside the box," Small was unlike many of his superiors who, for whatever reason, seemed incapable of leading in an environment of complexity and change. This case study, then, serves a dual purpose: examining success during operations while concurrently investigating certain shortcomings in high command.

Dean Black, in Chapter 5, comments upon the successes and failures of yet another controversial Canadian fighter ace, G.F. "Buzz" Beurling. Like Bishop, Beurling also chased after the enemy alone, thus leaving his fellow pilots to fend for themselves. Like Small, however, he too had the courage to face his superiors and seek those changes to tactics and procedures that he deemed essential. Fighting against those who minimized his operational experience and ability, Beurling continually ran afoul of his peers and superiors alike. Yet, for all of the tension that he created, he welcomed new squadron pilots, showed them "the ropes" and even attempted to disseminate his knowledge widely, thus signifying a corporate spirit that earlier historians have generally ignored. Black concludes that Beurling should be considered a leader in certain respects as he demonstrated important leader-

ship characteristics such as courage, both physical and moral, but that his individualistic nature – his inability to work with and for others – poses a significant barrier to him receiving this title unequivocally.

Remaining with the Second World War, Colonel Bernd Horn discusses in Chapter 6 the central role played by Colonel E.L.M. Burns in creating Canada's airborne forces. An intellectual who believed strongly in education and innovation in order to save lives, Burns lacked charisma, charm and personality. In a similar manner to Alderson, he too laid the foundation for an organization that, in time, would eventually blossom into something much greater than originally envisioned. Promoting progressive thought, he continually built upon his own experiences as well as the writings of others in order to formulate new and novel ways of employing Canada's forces. All in all, Burns demonstrated a flexibility of mind that served him well in coming to terms with the demands of modern war.

Jumping ahead to the 1990s, Roy Thomas offers in Chapter 7 an interesting examination of the leadership of Colonel George Oehring in Sector South during the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force in Croatia. A shrewd negotiator who based many of his actions on a profound cultural knowledge, Oehring was able to make peace a reality in the area for some time. His willingness to listen, to be present during negotiations and to create opportunities for the belligerents to talk all added to his success as a diplomat of sorts. His personality, which at times could be forceful and direct, yet at others, calm and reassuring, proved to be one of his greatest assets. Success, however, also resulted from his ability to forge effective relationships based on trust and respect with a diversity of "players" ranging from various UN agencies to the opposing factions to non-governmental organizations. Gaining credibility through his decisive actions, rather than just his words, Oehring was able to ensure a level of stability in Sector South that for some time had eluded his predecessors.

And finally, Chapter 8, again written by Thomas, explores the able leadership of Major-General Alain Forand in a variety of diverse circumstances, namely his time in Sector South in Croatia and during the 1998 Ice Storm in Ontario and Quebec. Thomas argues that it was Forand's willingness to seize the initiative, rather than wait for orders from higher commanders, that contributed to his success in preventing further human suffering and despair. This courage in doing what was right, when it was right, became a hallmark of his particular style of leadership. If he possessed moral courage, he also possessed physical courage, an attribute that distinguished his early military career. Being able to lead by positive example, Forand became a "hero" of sorts for the modern-day, an inspiration for others to follow and imitate. Yet in being heroic, he was also keen to act ethically and honestly, and always ensured that his decisions were made in the best interests of all involved.

In sum, *Neither Art, nor Science* provides a diversity of historical case studies drawn from the span of the twentieth century that offer interesting perspectives on a variety of leadership challenges. From leading in battle to leading in humanitarian relief efforts, the Canadian soldiers and aviators highlighted in the following pages have all dealt with complexity and crisis in their own particular way. Sometimes they remained stable in a sea of change, much to their own peril, yet sometimes they were in the vanguard of change, bringing new ideas and concepts to the fore. After laying the groundwork, many of their ideas firmly took root and influenced later operational and tactical successes. Taken together, their actions will hopefully provide a degree of guidance and advice to Canada's modern-day warriors who may one day find themselves confronting similar situations. Adapting to change is undoubtedly a requirement for success, but so is retaining those approaches to leadership that have proven useful and effective time and time again. The more one studies the past, the clearer it becomes that in some respects history is a wise and instructive teacher.

Endnotes

1 Canada, *Command* (Ottawa: DND, 1997), 4.

2 Canada, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Kingston: DND, 2005). It is within this powerful realm of influence and potential change that leadership best demonstrates the fundamental difference between it and the concept of command. Too often, the terms leadership and command are interchanged or seen as synonymous. But, they are not. Leadership can, and should, be a component of command. After all, to be an effective commander, the formal authority that comes with rank and position must be reinforced and supplemented with personal qualities and skills – the human side. Nonetheless, as discussed earlier, command is based on vested authority and assigned position and/or rank. It may only be exercised downward in the chain of command through the structures and processes of control. Conversely, leadership is not constrained by the limits of formal authority. Such a reality clearly differentiates leadership from command.

CHAPTER 1

Sir Edwin Alderson: Gentleman Soldier

Tom Leppard

Three men commanded the legendary Canadian Corps in the Great War, the so-called "ABC" generals: Edwin Alderson, Julian Byng and Arthur Currie.[1] Byng and Currie are historical celebrities, and with good reason. Innovative, intelligent and daring, they won battles and saved lives, qualities meagrely rationed amongst First World War generals.

Sir Julian Byng was a career British officer who took command of the Canadians in June 1916 after earning accolades evacuating the ill-fated Gallipoli expedition the previous winter.[2] A soldier's soldier, the tall and wiry "Bungo" is remembered as the Canadians' favourite commander. His audacious Easter morning capture of Vimy Ridge on 9 April 1917 (the British Army's first unqualified victory of the war) earned Byng a peerage and command of the British Third Army in June 1917. For their part, the victory at Vimy earned the Canadians a reputation as tough, innovative assault troops, second to none on the Western Front. Canada's Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, used Vimy's 10,000 Canadian casualties as leverage to demand Britain recognize that Canada had earned her sovereignty spurs and henceforth to be treated as a fully fledged ally. Borden further raised the stakes by demanding that a Canadian succeed Byng as the commander of the Canadian Corps. That Canadian was Arthur Currie.[3]

Photographer John Powis, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), C-1012

Lord Byng, as Canada's Governor-General. The second commander of the Canadian Corps, Byng is best remembered for his attack at Vimy Ridge in 1917.

In command of the 2nd Brigade, 1st Canadian Division, Arthur Currie arrived in England with the first contingent in October 1914. He owed his rank, as did all senior Canadian officers, to the patronage of the Minister of Militia and Defence, the controversial Sir Sam Hughes.[4] Patronage aside, during the 1st Division's

LAC, PA-2497

Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie (left) and Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, the British Commander-in-Chief (right). From June 1917, Currie continued to transform the Canadian Corps into one of the most effective fighting formations on the Western Front, building upon the earlier work of his predecessors.

immortal stand at Ypres against German gas attacks in April 1915, Currie showed enough promise to be considered for promotion. He did not have long to wait.[5] In September 1915, with the arrival in France of the 2nd Canadian Division, commanded by Hughes' protégé, the dashing Major-General Sir Richard Turner, V.C., the Canadian Corps became a reality.[6] As a result, the GOC (General Officer Commanding) 1st Division, Lieutenant-General Sir Edwin Alderson (a British general despised by Hughes), was given command of the corps. Alderson promptly promoted his favourite, Arthur Currie, to command the 1st Division.[7] Currie was an exceptional choice; Turner, in turn, faded to ignominy.[8]

A man with an instinctive grasp of trench warfare, Currie gleaned the hard lessons of the Western Front through the systematic evaluation of after battle reports and worked tirelessly to put the lessons learned into practice. A tactical innovator, Currie's motto was "waste shells not lives." To that end, he was instrumental in the

development of the corps' "bite and hold" attack doctrine based on systematic learning, meticulous planning, innovative training, tactics and technology, and precision artillery-infantry coordination.[9] The combined-arms assault was a winning formula.[10]

It seemed unlikely, however, that Currie would advance any higher. A shortage of professional officers might require Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig's "class conscious" high command to occasionally promote a talented colonial or territorial to command a division, but no further. Currie, for all of his innate talents, lacked pedigree; he was a colonial militia officer with bad credit.[11] But the war changed much, and what had been unthinkable in 1914 had been made a necessity by 1917 owing to heavy losses and the rapid expansion of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Byng wanted Arthur Currie to replace him and, following his departure to Third Army in June 1917, Currie became the highest-ranking colonial officer in the British Army. Merit had bested class; he never lost a battle.[12]

The contribution of Sir Edwin Alderson, the Canadian Expeditionary Force's (CEF) original commander, is harder to measure. Over-shadowed by the battlefield exploits of Byng and Currie, historians have focused on his stormy feud with Sam Hughes to the virtual exclusion of all else. He deserves better. Alderson faced a daunting task. He was charged with transforming a rag-tag, half-trained militia into a modern army. To make matters worse, his men were issued inferior Canadian equipment and weapons. Undaunted, he cleared the road of numerous obstacles for his successors, notably, the notorious Ross rifle, bad boots, sodden great coats, defective webbing, wobbly wagons and the MacAdam shovel.[13] He could not overcome, however, the ubiquitous malevolence of Sam Hughes. To Alderson's credit, when Byng replaced him in late-May 1916, the "weapon" had been forged. He had directed the growth of the Canadian Corps in France from one to three divisions with the fourth mustering in England. He had tried vainly to untangle the CEF's knotted bureaucracy in England, but it must have seemed easier stopping the Germans at Ypres! Yet, these fine accomplishments were over-

shadowed by his bare-knuckle feud with Hughes and, as important, his shortcomings as a field commander.[14]

To be fair, Alderson was doomed from the start. A powerful anti-Alderson cabal led by the conspiratorial Sir Sam Hughes and consisting of the "Canadian Eyewitness," Sir Max Aitkin (later Lord Beaverbrook), Major-General Sir Richard Turner (GOC 2nd

LAC, PA-168103

E.A.H. Alderson, a British regular officer and the first commander of the Canadian Corps. Between 1914 and 1916, he began the process of transforming Canada's raw soldiers into resolute professionals.

LAC, PA-704

Sir Sam Hughes, Canada's eccentric Minister of Militia and Defence, confidently striding ashore in France, 1916. His scheming and plotting eventually led to Alderson's downfall.

Division), Brigadier-General Garnet Hughes (Sam's son), and several other prominent high-ranking Canadians, wanted a Canadian corps commander, preferably Hughes or his protégé, Turner. Nascent Canadian "nationalism" was their impetus. It made no difference what Alderson did, whether right or wrong, they found fault even when his actions were obviously in the best interests of the CEF. The conspirators stalked him mercilessly and intrigued behind his back. It was a conspiracy of men with considerable influence in Canada and England, men determined to have their way, sooner or later. Small wonder that at times Alderson appeared to forget that his main purpose was to fight the German Army, so busy was he looking over his shoulder.[15]

Alderson might have improved his odds had he performed better in action. Though it was unlikely that anything he did, short of capturing the Kaiser, could have raised his stock with the Canadian conspirators, a better showing on the battlefield might have earned him the unequivocal support of the British high command. This was a key factor, since the British had the final say

LAC, PA-5592

A Canadian soldier from the 10th Battalion being decorated by Alderson in full view of his peers.

over who commanded the Canadians, particularly in the first two years of the war.[16]

As GOC 1st Canadian Division, Alderson is best remembered for its immortal stand against German gas attacks at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915. Nonetheless, at best, historians conclude that

he handled the Canadians adequately, albeit nervously. Friendly winds, German hesitation and the heroic "last-man" gallantry of the Canadian and British riflemen saved the day. In 1915, however, Alderson was a hero who had stood firm and the British high command whispered his name as a future corps commander. In September 1915, he was promoted GOC of the newly constituted Canadian Corps. In April 1916, he led the corps in its first action at the Battle of the St. Eloi Craters. It proved to be his last.[17]

Sir Richard Turner's novitiate 2nd Canadian Division had been sent to mop-up a British effort to straighten a 1500-metre salient in front of the crucial St. Eloi crossroads, five kilometers south of Ypres. It was a mess from the start. The battle began on 27 March when British sappers detonated six mines containing 33,000 kilograms of high explosives beneath the German lines. Major-General Aylmer Haldane's 3rd British Division quickly advanced beyond the craters and captured most of the German front line. Unfortunately, they misidentified two craters on their left flank and stopped their advance short of the final objective. It took several days for the confused Imperials to realize their mistake. A week of savage fighting followed before the exhausted British soldiers captured the craters and then passed the baton to Turner's unbloodied Canadians.[18] Two days after the relief, the Germans counter-attacked and regained the craters. Turner's hasty counter-attacks were repulsed with heavy losses, but eventually the Canadians reported that they had recaptured all six craters. This was not the case, though, as the Canadians had repeated the British mistake and misidentified the same two craters. How had this happened?[19]

Turner had inherited a catastrophe of mud, mire and wire; trenches were water-filled ditches; German artillery shelled the Canadians incessantly; and, to make matters worse, it rained continually, turning mine craters into lakes. To add to the confusion, the low cloud cover grounded aerial reconnaissance. The infantry advanced virtually blind, became disoriented in the muddy, featureless moonscape and repeated the British error. Without reliable intelligence, Turner lost control of the battle. Alderson

received word of the disaster too late and, despite the fact that he had sent several talented senior staff officers forward to find out what was going on, the battle ended in failure.[20] The weather cleared on 16 April and air reconnaissance photos revealed the ominous truth, the Germans held the craters on 2nd Division's left flank in strength. A few days later, Alderson ordered Turner to sack the infantry brigadier he considered directly responsible for the mistake. Turner refused. Alderson asked Sir Herbert Plumer, GOC Second Army, for permission to sack Turner and the errant brigadier. Plumer concurred.[21]

This was the opportunity that the conspirators had been waiting for and they quickly turned the tables on Alderson. Without the knowledge or approval of Prime Minister Borden or his Cabinet, Hughes secretly ordered co-conspirator Sir Max Aitken to Field-Marshal Douglas Haig's headquarters in France. On 22 April, Aitken arrived at Haig's chateau. Alderson was unaware of the cloak-and-dagger plot that was unfolding. The meeting was short but deadly. Aitken made it clear to Haig that the Canadian government would not let Alderson sack the two Canadians. Haig reasoned that it was better to keep a couple of incompetent Canadians and sacrifice Alderson than upset the entire Canadian war effort. He removed Alderson and, at the suggestion of Aitken, appointed him Inspector-General of Canadian Forces in England. Exactly a month later, on 28 May 1916, Sir Edwin Alderson went home. He bore his shame to the grave.[22]

Sixteen months earlier in October 1914, as the 55-year-old Alderson stood quayside at Portsmouth and watched 30,000 half-trained men of the CEF's first contingent disembark, he could hardly have imagined how things would turn out. It was his job to turn this rabble into soldiers and it was a job that he had prepared for his entire career.[23] For three decades, he had raised and trained irregulars, including Canadians, to fight Queen Victoria's wars of empire from Tel-el-Kebir to Paardeburg. Canadians first served with him in the South African, or Boer, War. Two units, the Royal Canadian Dragoons and the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles,

were part of Alderson's mounted infantry brigade tasked with chasing Boer kommandos across the South African veldt. He had earned the respect of the Canadians and veterans spoke of him as a proper gentlemen and a cool hand in a tight spot.[24]

Trooper William Griesbach (later the mayor of Edmonton and the famous commander of both the 49th Battalion, Loyal Edmonton Rifles, and the 1st Brigade during the First World War) had witnessed first hand Alderson's legendary *sang froid* during a Boer ambush at Klip River in May 1900. "General Alderson was a fox hunting enthusiast, and carried his hunting horn…and [the bleating sound] was quite familiar to us." Surprised by the Boers and taking point blank fire from a pom-pom gun, Alderson jumped on a pile of rocks and sounded his horn. What must have been a sight, "…there he stood, tootling his horn in the midst of bursting shells until the last man had got away. I thought him a very proper figure of a soldier and a gentleman."[25] In 1914, South African War veterans from coast to coast nodded their approval when they heard of Alderson's appointment. But not everyone cheered, notably Sam Hughes.

Sir Sam hated British officers and his acrimony also had Boer War roots. He alleged that the rampant colonialism of British officers had stopped him from getting the Victoria Cross (side-stepping the obvious disqualification that he had nominated himself). Never one to forgive an affront – real or imagined – he had publicly denounced the entire British officer class as "Barroom loafers." When war came in 1914, Britain's Secretary of War, Lord Kitchener, insisted that an experienced British general command the Canadians. He therefore provided Hughes with the names of three candidates including Alderson, whose popularity with the Canadians made him the obvious choice. Sir Sam temporarily kenneled his antipathy for British officers and selected Alderson, but from the outset, he harangued Borden endlessly that a Canadian replace Alderson ... and the sooner the better. Until then, he monitored Alderson's every move, every command, every promotion; nothing escaped his scrutiny. Alderson had unknowingly wandered into a minefield.[26]

Did Alderson fully understand just how underhanded and conspiratorial Sam Hughes could be? Was he aware of the political tightrope he walked serving two masters, the Canadian government and the British Army? Alderson's letters to Borden suggest that he did not fully grasp the complexities of this position or preferred to minimize the intricacies. Apparently unaware of what lay ahead or preferring not to look, Alderson took the first contingent to Salisbury Plain for training and immediately ran afoul of the minister.[27]

So who in fact was Sir Edwin Alderson? Born 3 April 1859 into the privilege of Victorian gentry, he was well bred and properly educated. He married the proverbial vicar's daughter and was the friend of dukes and kings. His military career began in 1878 with a commission in the legendary Royal West Kent Regiment, "The Buffs." Promotion followed quickly and he saw his first action in Africa with Garnet Wolseley's Nile Expedition in 1882. He was decorated at Tel-el-Kebir in 1884 and commanded the Camel Corps during the Nile Expedition of 1884-85. He commanded the relief of Salisbury in 1896, leading troops that he had raised and trained in the Mashonaland and was again decorated. In 1885, sailing to Africa, he leapt overboard and saved a drowning soldier, for which he received a Red Cross bravery medal. During the Boer War, he distinguished himself while commanding a mounted infantry brigade. Post-war, his reputation for training earned him the plumb command of the British Army's training depot at Aldershot. In 1906, he received his major-general's red tabs and went to India to command the 6th Poona Division until his retirement in 1912.[28]

Alderson had friends in high places. He served as aide-de-camp to Queen Victoria and King Edward VII from 1900 to 1906 and was a confidant and friend of the Duke of Connaught, George V's brother and Canada's governor-general during the First World War. A man of letters, Alderson penned several books including *Pink and Scarlet or Hunting as a School for Soldiering*, a title that suggests his views on soldiering did not challenge nineteenth

century military orthodoxy.[29] An avid foxhunter, he captained numerous hunts and kept his own kennel. He owned and raced horses and yachts and was a member of numerous sailing clubs. He seemed the perfect Victorian gentleman-soldier, a man of his times. Had the First World War not erupted, he would have retired with an unblemished service record and spent his golden years hunting, racing and yachting, and, one suspects, writing his memoirs. But fate was not finished with Alderson, not yet.

Recalled to the colours in 1914 to drill the unruly Canadians, he commanded the Canadians longer than Byng or Currie. Yet, few clues exist to indicate what kind of leader he was. What we do know about him is this: for him, his men came first and he willingly battled Hughes to ensure that they were properly equipped, armed and provisioned. He promoted on the basis of merit not patronage. His standard of military excellence was a British infantry division and he trained the Canadians to fit the "rifle and bayonet" mold of 1914.[30] When embattled by the minister, he turned to his friends in high places. Unfortunately for Alderson, they were not in the right places to prevent his demise. But this is old ground; new ground needs tilling.[31]

The interesting question yet to be answered is this: what part, if any, did Alderson play in transforming the Canadians from a "standard issue" British division into the elite assault formation that later captured Hill 70 and smashed the Hindenburg Line? Again, there are few clues and some of the most telling evidence is negative. For example, historian Bill Rawling's seminal techno-tactical study of the Canadian Corps' metamorphosis, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914–1918*, barely mentions Alderson. What clues exist suggest that he was no innovator, a fact confirmed by the observant William Griesbach. "He was [not] a genius," revealed Griesbach, "His perception was not remarkable and he had no very great sense of humor."[32] He commanded "by the book" and when faced with the unique combat environment of the Western Front, he stayed hide-

bound to tradition and failed to learn and change. Unlike Byng and Currie, he was unable to build a command team. His divisional commanders were split into factions. Currie (1st) and Louis Lipsett (3rd) were friends, but Turner (2nd) and David Watson (4th) were Hughes' conspirators. A team emerged only after Borden sacked Hughes for insubordination in November 1916 and, with the door open, Byng removed Turner.[33]

Speculating is always risky, but it seems clear that even had Borden removed Hughes and kept Alderson, Sir Edwin was not the man to hone the Canadian Corps. This required a more skilled craftsman, a view held by the men who served under him at the time. "It cannot be claimed that the Canadian Corps under General Alderson attained to any extraordinary degree of efficiency or that its operations were marked with that certitude of success," acknowledged Griesbach. For this to happen, Alderson and Hughes had to go. With the way cleared and under the inspired team leadership of Byng and Currie, the Canadians became the best little army in Europe.[34]

What then is Alderson's legacy? His obituary provided a fitting epitaph. One senior-ranking veteran noted, "He took over an inexperienced half-trained body of troops, and assumed a gigantic task in licking them into shape. The foundations of the wonderful fighting machine that the Corps became were unquestionably laid by General Alderson."[35] Griesbach, however, knew the full truth. "Both men [Alderson and Byng]," he explained,

> were distinguished Imperial soldiers, with long and varied experience, but here the parallel ends. Byng had a keen insight and an active mind – constantly speculating and inquiring, [and had] a wonderful sense of humour. [Ergo, qualities Alderson lacked] … The Canadian Corps under Byng became the most powerful and efficient machine on the Western Front.[36]

In sum, it can be said about Edwin Alderson that he was first off the mark and thus made his name by training and organizing the Canadian Corps. There is little doubt that he did his very best, but it is equally evident that he was not the great captain capable of learning and implementing the hard lessons of trench warfare that, under the adept tutelage of Byng and Currie, transformed the Canadian Corps into the British Army's premier assault formation by 1918, what one historian has labelled the "Shock Army of the British Empire." This was simply beyond Alderson; he did not have a Vimy or Canal du Nord up his sleeve. Sam Hughes had it right (though for all the wrong reasons) when he argued that for the good of the corps, Alderson had to go.

Notwithstanding this assessment, Alderson remains a tragic figure. He gave his best under extremely difficult, often impossible, conditions, both on and off the battlefield. But his best just was not good enough. Though it became apparent after St. Eloi that he was not the man for the job, he served the Canadian government loyally and honourably and deserved to be treated better. But, wars are anything but fair, and in the final analysis, Alderson was just another casualty of the Western Front. His bittersweet farewell to the Corps revealed the true measure of the man:

> I have been ordered to take up the appointment of Inspector General to the Canadian forces.... To Soldiers "the order" is a magic word, that is it goes without saying, or questioning, that what is ordered is right and for the best. This fact is the only thing that in any way alleviates the intense regret I have at leaving the Corps which I have been so proud to command.... Finally I would ask the Corps never to forget its motto "Conscientienties vi trahunt victoriam" [Those in agreement seize victory by force].[37]

Finding dignity in humiliation, he remained to the end, the gentleman soldier.

Suggeted Further Reading

Chisholm, Anne. *Lord Beaverbrook: A Life*. New York: Knopf, 1992.

Duguid, A.F. *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War, 1914-1919: General Series*. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1938.

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Morton, Desmond. *A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to Kosovo*. 4th ed. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1999.

---------- and J.L. Granatstein, *Marching to Armageddon: Canadians and the Great War, 1914-1919*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989.

Wood, Alan. *The True History of Lord Beaverbrook*. London: Heinemann, 1965.

Endnotes

1 Colonel G.W.L. Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 540. Their command profiles are as follows:

Lieutenant-General Sir E.A.H. Alderson	**GOC 1st Division** 29 September 1914 to 12 September 1915 **GOC Canadian Corps** 13 September 1915 to 28 May 1916
Lieutenant-General Sir Julian Byng	**GOC Canadian Corps** 29 May 1916 to 8 June 1917
Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie	**Brigadier 2nd Brigade** 1 September 1914 to 13 September 1915 **GOC 1st Division** 13 September 1915 to 8 June 1917 **GOC Canadian Corps** 9 June 1917 to 8 August 1919

2 Jeffery Williams, *Byng of Vimy – General and Governor General* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press [UTP], 1983).

3 J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army – Waging War and Keeping the Peace* (Toronto: UTP, 2002), 98-119.

4 Daniel Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders' Fields* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), 59. J.F.C. Fuller's infamous quip that the men of the first contingent looked first rate, but that their officers should all be shot, was wide of the mark. Currie and the men destined to command the four divisions, Macdonnell, Burstall, Lipsett and Watson, the artillery GOC, Morrison, and the GOC engineers, Lindsay, all landed with the first contingent. By 1918, they had become the BEF's best. Their terms of command follow. See Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 540-541.

Major-General Archibald **Macdonnell**	GOC 1st Division	9 June 1917 to 12 September 1919
Major-General Henry **Burstall**	GOC 2nd Division	15 December 1916 to 22 May 1919
Major-General Louis **Lipsett** (Killed in Action)	GOC 3rd Division	16 June 1916 to 12 September 1918
Major-General David **Watson**	GOC 4th Division	25 April 1916 to 23 June 1919
Major-General W.G. **Lindsay**	GOC Engineers	7 March 1916 to 11 July 1919
Major General E.W.D. **Morrison**	GOC Artillery	18 December 1916 to 17 May 1919

5 Currie's performance at Ypres was not without controversy. See Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders' Fields*, 188-196. The best account is Tim Travers, "Currie and 1st Canadian Division at Second Ypres, April 1915, Controversy, Criticism and Official History," *Canadian Military History* [*CMH*], Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1996), 7-15.

6 Thomas Leppard, "'Dashing Subaltern:' Sir Richard Turner in Retrospect," *CMH*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Autumn 1997), 24.

7 See Ibid., 24-26. Turner, arguably Canada's most popular soldier, commanded the 3rd Brigade at Ypres. Turner was Hughes' favourite, but not Alderson's. Turner received command of the 2nd Division due to Hughes' patronage, but Alderson chose Currie to replace him at 1st Division based on merit.

8 Daniel Dancocks, *Sir Arthur Currie: A Biography* (Toronto: Muethen, 1985); A.M.J. Hyatt, *General Sir Arthur Currie* (Toronto: UTP, 1987); and, Hugh M. Urquhart, *Arthur Currie – The Biography of a Great Canadian* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1950).

9 Patrick Brennan and Thomas Leppard, "How the Lessons were Learned: Senior Commanders and the Moulding of the Canadian Corps after the Somme," in Yves Tremblay, ed., *Canadian Military History Since the 17th Century: Proceedings of the Canadian Military History Conference, Ottawa, 5-9 May 2000* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence [DND], Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH], 2002), 135-143.

10 See Shane B. Schreiber, *Shock Army of the British Empire: The Canadian Corps in the Last 100 Days of the Great War* (Westport: Praeger, 1997).

11 For a full disclosure of Currie's embezzlement of regimental funds, see Robert Craig Brown and Desmond Morton, "The Embarrassing Apotheosis of a 'Great Canadian:' Sir Arthur Currie's personal crisis in 1917," *Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 60, No.1 (March l979), 41–63.

12 The talented Australian Major-General Sir John Monash was next. He received command of the Australian Corps in early-1918. Historians often debate who was better, Currie or Monash. What is more striking are the similarities. Both were militia trained and not hidebound to the "rifle and bayonet" traditions that hindered tactical change and innovation in much of the British Army. Command of a homogenous national corps was likely their most important advantage. The topic remains controversial. See Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front – The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916- 1918* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), 192-200. See also, G.D. Sheffield, "How Even was the Learning Curve? Reflections of the British and Dominion Armies on the Western Front 1916-1918," in Yves Tremblay, ed., *Canadian Military History Since the 17th Century: Proceedings of the Canadian Military History Conference, Ottawa, 5-9 May 2000* (Ottawa: DND, DHH, 2002), 125-134.

13 The MacAdam shovel, with a hole in the blade, was designed to protect riflemen, while at the same time serving as an entrenching tool. Not surprisingly, it was quickly discarded.

14 Desmond Morton, *A Peculiar Kind of Politics: Canada's Overseas Ministry in the First World War* (Toronto: UTP, 1982).

15 Sandra Gwyn, *Tapestry of War: A Private View of Canadians in the Great War* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1992), 273-294.

16 Alderson did not have a high-ranking promoter and mentor. Tim Travers points out that in the St. Eloi aftermath, several British senior officers, notably Major-General Alymer Haldane (GOC 3rd

Division), with friends in high places, was saved from sacking, but not the unfortunate Alderson. See Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1987), 22-23.

17 Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 137-145.

18 Ibid., 138-139. The Canadian government (or more presumably, Sam Hughes) demanded that the corps remain and fight intact. British corps changed divisions, usually holding them for specific operations and then shuttling them to the next corps for the next engagement. Thus, when Turner's division went to St. Eloi, the Canadian Corps relieved Lieutenant-General Edward Fanshawe's V Corps. This was the British Army's first corps for corps relief of the war.

19 Tim Cook, "The Blind Leading the Blind: The Battle of the St. Eloi Craters," *CMH*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1996), 24-36.

20 Thomas Leppard, "Richard Turner and the Battle of St. Eloi," Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Calgary, 1994, 75. Alderson sent his senior staff officer, GSO 1, Tim Harington, one of the British Army's brightest and best, to help Turner. Harington found the situation so confused he returned none the wiser.

21 See Cook, "The Blind Leading the Blind," 24-26.

22 See Leppard, "Richard Turner and the Battle of St. Eloi," 103-112.

23 Dancocks, *Welcome to Flanders' Fields*, 56 and 57.

24 Extract from "The Khaki Call," February 1928, W.A. Griesbach, Vol. 2, 1815, 4-40, Record Group [RG] 24, *Library and Archives Canada* [*LAC*].

25 Ibid.

26 Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 28 and 29.

27 See Borden papers, Vol. 36, Manuscript Group [MG] 26 - H1(a), *LAC*.

28 Extract from *Who's Who 1921*, Lieutenant-General Sir Edwin Alfred Alderson, Vol. 2, 1815, 4-40, RG 24, *LAC*.

29 Ibid.

30 Extract from "The Khaki Call," February 1928, W.A. Griesbach, Vol. 2, 1815, 4-40, RG 24, *LAC*.

31 Ibid.

32 Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps, 1914-1918* (Toronto: UTP, 1992).

33 Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force*, 542. Watson was 4th Division's only GOC.

34 Extract from "The Khaki Call," February 1928, W.A. Griesbach, Vol. 2, 1815, 4-40, RG 24, *LAC*.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Special Order by Lieutenant-General Sir Edwin Alderson, K.C.B., Commanding Canadian Army Corps, 28 May 1916, page 31818, Vol. 62, MG 26-H1(a), *LAC*. Alderson borrowed this phrase from his beloved "Buffs."

CHAPTER 2

Untested Valour: The Taking of Hill 145

Rob Williams

Theirs is not to reason why,
Theirs is but to do and die:
Into the Valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
Alfred Lord Tennyson

More often than not, military failures are dissected and re-fought with twenty-twenty hindsight and are judged by today's standards. Rather than examine yet another failure, I would propose the following question: Why is it that untested soldiers often succeed when the odds are seemingly stacked against them? For example, the capture of Hill 145 by elements of the 85th Battalion (Nova Scotia Highlanders) on 10 April 1917 provides a case in point. Hill 145 was the 4th Canadian Infantry Division's objective during the fateful attack on Vimy Ridge. As the highest and most dominant point of this geographical feature, it was clearly vital ground. As long as it remained in German hands, the enemy could observe all movement in the Souchez Valley and its southern offshoot, the Zouave Valley, which ran behind the 4th Division's front. Equally important, it could dominate any approach with fire. Once taken, however, Hill 145 would afford its captors a commanding view of the German rearward defences in the Douai Plain and on the ridge itself. It was thus a valuable prize, though the task of attaining it was formidable.[1] So enter the Nova Scotia (NS) Highlanders.

LAC, PA-924

Robert Borden, Canada's Prime Minister, inspecting the 85th Battalion, March 1917.

Background (The Untested Battalion)

The 85th Battalion, NS Highlanders, which arrived in France in February 1917 to serve as pioneers, was described as an ugly duckling battalion. They belonged to no brigade. They had never fought a battle. Two hundred were still in England, laid-up with mumps. The others had only recently arrived in France, and on the channel crossing, they had all been seasick. Most were big strapping fellows, but their tasks were menial: building and filling dumps; digging deep dugouts and assembly trenches; carrying and stringing wire; lugging forward loads of ammunition; and, escorting and guarding prisoners of war. They were, in short, a labour battalion, not a fighting unit.[2] The "kiltless" Highlanders as they were scornfully called (they received authorization to wear the Argyle & Sutherland kilt on 17 May 1918, with their kilts finally arriving on 8 June 1918) supported the 4th Division through its work. Authority to wear the 4th Division's insignia, a green patch, was granted on 2 April 1917. Despite all of this, morale was good and the hardy NS Highlanders were determined to prove themselves. Vimy Ridge was to be the first "big show" or engagement in which the 85th Battalion would take part. This

was not an envious situation. The battalion had recently been substituted for another of the 12th Brigade.[3]

Lead-up to Vimy Ridge, 9 April 1917

As part of Robert Nivelle's offensive against the Germans in the spring of 1917 – he had replaced Joseph Joffre as Comamander-in-Chief of the French Army in December 1916 – the British, as a diversion, were to attack in the direction of Arras, while the Canadians were to storm and capture Vimy Ridge. Earlier in the year, the Germans had withdrawn many of their forces to the heavily-fortified Hindenburg Line, although they maintained a strong garrison in the area of Arras and Vimy, given the commanding view that the ridge offered. Both the British and the French had earlier attempted to storm the crest owing to its tactical importance and both had been repulsed with significant loss. The task soon fell to the four Canadian divisions which, on this occasion, would fight together for the first time. By 1917, the Canadians had won a reputation for tenacity in battle and, more important, success. In the months that followed, the Canadian Corps would add to their laurels and become what historian Shane Schreiber has called the "Shock Army of the British Empire."[4]

LAC, PA-1666

The 85th Battalion on its way to the front.

On the day of the battle, the Nova Scotians had been given the lowly task of digging a new communication trench from the rear lines and across the ridge, directly over Hill 145.[5] As the morning wore on, disquieting rumours began to circulate in regards to the enemy's resistance. It seemed that they had repelled all efforts at seizing the formidable position. At noon, it was definitely learned that the Canadians were held up at Hill 145 and that the success of the whole operation was now threatened. Two battalions had already been smashed before it and a general engagement had failed to dislodge the enemy from this seemingly impregnable point.[6]

The 85th was soon ordered to move into position as "a working unit," that is, to follow the troops into action and to carry ammunition, build dugouts, maintain communication trenches, clear wire entanglements, and in general, mop up. The men of the 85th were regarded as green troops and it was not considered likely that they would be efficient and steady under fire. Despite no order to do so, the leadership of the 85th had been preparing the battalion as much for a fighting role as a working one. The unit was trained in every detail of the upcoming operation, until all ranks knew the precise layout of the Vimy front and how the fighting units would operate. They were ready to fight and eventually got their chance.[7] The initiative of senior officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) ensured that by careful and detailed training, and a thorough knowledge of the attack plan, the battalion could be used either to exploit success or to prevent failure, depending upon the circumstances.

Extracts from the battalion's War Diary[8] from 3-9 April 1917 paint a vivid picture of the preparations made by the unit's leadership prior to the battle:

> 3/4/17
> Owing to the fall of snow during the night it was impossible to practice the attack over the tapes. Lt. Col. Phinney explained scheme to Battalion in Y.M.C.A. Hut. The snow disappeared before noon and the attack was practiced in

the afternoon. Our artillery near billets active during afternoon. Advice received today from 4th Canadian Division that one Company of the 44th Bn [Battalion] at BOUVIGNY would be under orders of the 85th Bn in the event of a tactical call from the 73rd Infantry Brigade (Imperial) for the defence of LORETTE SPUR.

4/4/17
The Battalion went out over the attack scheme today over the tapes but were interrupted by the enemy dropping 5 or 6 shells in the vicinity.

5/4/17
Officers and NCOs of D and C Coys [Companies] went to CHATEAU-DE-LA-HAIE to go over the attack scheme on the tapes. Lieuts W.T. Ruggles, W.J. Wright with Scout NCOs ... went to MUSIC HALL LINE to go over location in attack. Orders received for move to MUSIC HALL LINE on night of 7/8 April preparatory to attack. The Commanding Officer went over tasks with various officers in charge of parties of 85th.

6/4/17
Notice that ZERO for the VIMY attack would be 5.00 am, 8-4-17. C.O. [Commanding Officer] called at Brigade about 11.00 P.M. to complete arrangements re operation 8-4-17, advised by G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] that operations postponed 24 hours.

7/4/17
B Coy used all day cleaning up and A and D Companies carried on with instruction in attack scheme. Enemy shelling in the vicinity occasionally.

8/4/17
Advance party for position during operation marched off at 1.00 P.M. Battalion moved off at 6.00 pm. Received tools

at BERTHONVAL at 9.00 pm. In position MUSIC HALL LINE at 12 midnight. Very limited dugout accommodation. Men crowded in trench, secured very little rest.

9/4/17
The tasks allotted to the Battalion and practiced for some weeks were:

(a) Construction and filling Dump at Strong Points 5 and 6: Lieut. King with No.6 Platoon, B Company.

(b) Construction of deep dugout for report centre at Strong Point 6: Lieut. Chipman and No.5 Platoon B Coy.

(c) Digging C.T. [Communication Trench] from Assembly Trench to BASSO line along BLACK-BILLY-BIFF-BESSY line. D Company under Capt P.W. Anderson, Lieut. Wylie and Lieut. Graham; C Company under Capt H.E. Crowell, Lieut. Crawley, and Lieut. Manning. Capt Anderson in Command of the whole party.

(d) Party to carry wire and assist Brigade wiring party in construction. Lieut. Hallett with 40 OR [Other Ranks] of No.7 Platoon, B Coy; Lieut. Borden with 40 OR of No.3 Platoon, A Company.

(e) Party to carry forward ammunition for Stokes Guns: Lieut. Hensley and No.1 Platoon, A Coy.

(f) Prisoners of War Escort Party: Sgt Horne with 25 other ranks from HQ details.

(g) Prisoners of War Guards: Sgt Robart with 10 Other Ranks from B Coy.

(h) Battle Police: Sgt Fulton with 12 Other Ranks from A Coy.

LAC, PA-1123

The Canadians at Vimy, moving past captured German prisoners and exploding shells.

> Leaving Lieut. MacFarlane with 4th Platoons [sic] and the remaining HQ details as the reserve. About 2.00 am orders were received to detail 50 Other Ranks to carry water, and Lieut. MacFarlane's Platoon was sent out on this work. The O.C. [Officer Commanding] Battalion was to be advised when the situation would permit these various parties to proceed to their tasks, and the parties were held in readiness from ZERO hour.

9 April 1917: The Battle Progresses

The objectives of the Canadians Corps at Vimy were many. Elements of each division were to capture their designated positions while other, fresher units would leapfrog over them and continue onto their appointed objectives. Moving behind a creeping barrage, which kept the Germans' heads down until the Canadians were on top of them, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Divisions, in order from south to north, advanced quickly to their lines, capturing most of their objectives by early morning. By battle's end, some few days later, they had captured the towns of Thelus and Farbus, stopping just short of Vimy itself. The 4th Division, how-

ever, on the northernmost flank of the attack, met with much stiffer resistance at Hill 145, the highest point of the ridge, and, by 12 April, had advanced the least of the Canadian divisions, ending up to the west of Givenchy-en-Gohelle.

The overwhelming success of the Canadians at Vimy was due in large measure to extensive pre-battle preparations. Soldiers were continuously trained on taped courses that resembled the trenches that they would assault; maps were widely distributed to all so that they were better informed; artillery shells were numerous in quantity; and, tunnels were dug, and in some cases improved, to move the assaulting troops and supplies forward without serious threat of injury or observation. All of this, combined with a whirlwind barrage that shocked even the Canadians in its intensity, contributed to the victory at Vimy, a victory, however, that still cost some 10,000 casualties.

Late on 9 April, the defences of Hill 145 were still jutting out into the centre of the 4th Division's position, where the left wing of Brigadier-General V.W. Odlum's 11th Brigade had been cut to ribbons from the start.[9] The 85th Battalion was chosen by Odlum to deliver the attack. They now had the opportunity to prove themselves. In fact, in this their first action, they would be instrumental in determining the success of the contest for Vimy Ridge.[10] The battalion's War Diary records the spontaneity of the assignment:

> 9/4/17
> From our own O.P. [Observation Post] and our Liaison Officer Lieut. Verner, who was at Brigade HQ, we were kept informed of the progress of the attack. Early in the afternoon it became evident that the attack was held up on the left front of our Brigade. From Lieut. Verner we learned that the Brigade and Division were considering the advisability of detailing 2 Companies of the 85th Bn to launch an attack on the positions which were holding up the advance. The CO decided that if such an order came he would detail D and C Companies under the com-

> mand of Capt Anderson to carry out the attack. The OCs these Companies were sent for and informed of the situation, and told to draw all available Bombs and Rifle Grenades in MUSIC HALL LINE and have them issued to their men. Lieut. Verner, Liaison Officer, was informed he would command a platoon of D Coy in the attack.

The proper choice and use of a liaison officer ensured that the battalion was kept as up-to-date as possible on the current situation so that they could respond quickly in the event of an urgent requirement for action. This "situational awareness" allowed preliminary preparations for any moves, re-equipping or reorganization to be carried out. Once again, the War Diary captures the sequence of events:

> 9/4/17
> About 3.15 pm an order was received that two Companies equipped with Bombs, Ammunition, Tools, Reserve Rations and water, would at 4.30 pm be at the exit of TOTTENHAM TUNNEL and CAVALIER TUNNEL respectively, the right Company under the orders of OC 102nd Bn and the left Company under the OC 87th Bn, and that these Company Commanders would report to the respective OCs these Battalions immediately for instructions.
>
> The OC notified Lieut.Col. Phinney, 2nd in Command, who had established a report centre near the exit of TOTTENHAM TUNNEL, to go to OC 87th and be present while Capt Crowell of C Company was getting instruction, and assist Capt Crowell in the plans for his Company. The OC himself went with Capt Anderson of D Company to HQ 102nd Bn for the same purpose. When the CO arrived at the HQ of the 102nd a message was there from the G.O.C. 11th Brigade, requiring the CO and Capt Anderson to report at Brigade Headquarters. He did this and was there informed that it was decided to leave the two Companies under the Command of the OC 85th. The

> information received was that the Germans held BATTER trench, from its junction with BLACK on the right to the vicinity of Crater at S.15.d.20.45. That the previous attacking Battalions had passed this line and it was thought some of the men might be further in front in BASSO and BEGGAR. That the enemy in front had not been properly mopped up and that these had emerged from their dugouts and mine shafts and were holding this position. That the situation demanded that they be cleared out of this before dark. That there would be a 12 minute barrage and that the OC 85th was to inform the Brigadier at what hour he wished ZERO to be.

The storming of Hill 145 had become paramount. Its dominating position was a thorn in the flanks of the neighboring divisions. From this vantage point, the enemy poured a withering harassing fire into the 3rd Division. Zero Hour for the assault, however, was to change a number of times before finally being set for 6.45 pm, to be preceded by a twelve-minute artillery barrage. Both companies left the Tottenham Subway and waded into their jumping-off trenches. Just as the last man left the Tunnel, a message arrived from the brigade commander, Brigadier-General Odlum, canceling the barrage on the recommendation of the Commanding Officer of the 85th Battalion.[11] The War Diary explains:

> 9/4/17
> The CO decided that the two Companies should emerge from the left exit of TOTTENHAM TUNNEL, which would be near the centre of the position to be attacked, and that C Company would go to the left and D Company to the right and occupy the new front line which had been dug on this Brigade frontage. Battalion HQ was moved up near this exit. It was explained to the O's [officers] C Companies [sic] that D Coy would attack with its right on the BLACK C.T. inclusive, and left to BAUBLE C.T. exclusive. C Company with its right flank BAUBLE trench inclusive and its left on the junction of BASSO and

> BATTER. The task being the capture of BATTER trench and its consolidation.

The CO's plan was predicated on Brigadier Odlum's assigned task, which was "the 85th Battalion will capture and hold BATTER trench and will get in contact with battalions on the flanks."[12] The CO assigned two companies to the assault: Captain Harvey Crowell's "C" Company from Halifax (left forward) and Captain Percy Anderson's "D" Company from Cape Breton (right forward).[13] The CO placed Captain Percival Anderson in command as he knew that this officer "would take the position or die in the attempt."[14] The War Diary recounts the events:

> 9/4/17
> A conference was held of all the Officers and senior NCOs of these Coys, at the new Battalion HQ, orders were issued and explained and it was estimated that it would take ¼ of an hour to get the Companies out of the TUNNEL into the new front line. The Brigadier was so informed and ZERO hour was set for 6.45 pm.
>
> C Coy led out of the TUNNEL, filing to the left, D Coy following and going to the right. The CO outside at the exit of the TUNNEL directed the Companies to their positions. At ZERO, just as the last men of D Coy were emerging from the TUNNEL, a Staff Officer of the 11th C.I. [Canadian Infantry] Brigade, stating that it had been decided to have no barrage and that the attack should be modified accordingly.

The news came too late to reach the company commanders on the far flanks of their sub-units at the end of the trench. The decision not to precede the attack with a bombardment was based on the fact that the Canadian Corps had been so successful in its overall attack, aside from the remaining resistance on Hill 145, that its new lines were in very close proximity to those of the remaining enemy. Therefore, any artillery bombardment would prove as

dangerous to the Canadians as it would to the enemy.[15] As a result, the attack would rely upon proper training, familiarity with the objective and trust in leaders, by all ranks. Hesitation or any faltering could spell disaster.

Zero Hour came with no barrage. Crowell decided to go, guns or no guns. He waved his hand forward and the company climbed out of the trench. To Crowell's dismay, Anderson's company was not advancing. It occurred to Crowell that perhaps he had made a terrible mistake. However, he was not to be disappointed. Anderson had also been waiting for the barrage, but upon seeing Crowell's men advancing, he too led his company forward.[16]

The enemy reacted with ferocity. As the Nova Scotians plunged on, the hail of bullets increased. This was the moment that every commander feared. There was no cover and the troops had been ordered not to stop and fire back, but to keep moving. Such an order was almost more than the human psyche could bear; their instinct was to slow down, to stop, to grovel deep into the mud, anything to escape the deadly fusillade.[17] Nonetheless, the assault did not waiver. A cohesive motivated unit, with friends fighting alongside friends, whom they would never want to let down, and to a lesser extent endeavouring to build the reputation of the 85th, the men did not falter.

From the moment that "C" and "D" Companies went over the top, they proceeded on to their objective, the crest of Hill 145, with the precision and steadiness of inured troops. Outstanding was the conduct of Captain Percival W. Anderson, who, amongst other exploits, single-handedly performed a deed of heroism that won for him the Military Cross (it should have been the Victoria Cross).[18] The very audacity of their demeanor was one of the greatest factors of their success.[19] Two well-respected company commanders, understanding the necessity of their mission and leading by personal example, were at the forefront of the attack. At the risk of losing face, the soldiers could not but follow their officers' example.

The Germans were overcome by the same human tendency to panic as that which was probably felt by many of the Nova Scotians as they advanced into the hail of fire. When a few turned to flee, more and more followed, and the 85th, firing rifles and Lewis guns on the run, swarmed up the hill, killing 70 of the enemy as they advanced.[20] The War Diary recounts the attack:

> 9/4/17
> The Company Commanders were on the outward flanks of their Companies, and owing to the winding nature of the new front line trench were out of sight. The CO decided it was folly to attempt, at ZERO hour, to alter the plan. He feared that it might result in disconcerted action, as it was impossible to communicate any further orders to everyone concerned before ZERO hour. He waited to see whether the Companies would advance without a barrage. A half minute after ZERO, C Company on the left moved calmly and deliberately out of the trenches, the advance was taken up by D Coy. In spite of the Machine Gun and rifle fire from the enemy, which was immediately opened, the attack was pressed home, the Companies providing their own covering fire by Lewis Guns firing from the hip and riflemen firing on the move. Many of the Germans finding themselves unable to stop the advance turned and ran but were soon put out of action by our fire. About 20 prisoners, including 3 Officers, were taken. Two Hun Officers and about 70 other ranks were killed. At least three machine guns were captured.
>
> Within 10 minutes after ZERO report was communicated to a Battalion Staff Officer by the Brigadier that the attack had been completely successful. The OC attack pressed on to BASSO and immediately commenced the work of consolidation. A portion of both Companies on the left flank, where the trenches were more defined, remained at BATTER.

> The CO and the Adjutant at once went out to make a reconnaissance of the new position and remained there supervising the work during the night. The 2nd-in-Command went out to supervise a readjustment of the right flank to gain touch with the 102nd Bn on the right. The Companies reorganized and the line was extended to the right. The men in BATTER were brought up to BASSO. Snowed in evening, turned very cold. Men in the open holding shell holes.

Hill 145 had withstood numerous attacks and remained in German hands until the untried pioneer battalion, the 85th, launched a desperate attack across the fields to the south of the German position. The men surged across the enemy's fields of fire and somehow managed to take the German fortified trenches on the formidable hill that so many others had failed to do. Their achievement was commendable, particularly as it was their first action![21] Within one hour, the Highlanders without kilts had captured Hill 145 and exceeded their orders by exploiting beyond it.[22] The report that their objective had been taken and that the section of the line consolidated was sent to Battalion Headquarters less than an hour from the start of the attack.[23] According to Captain Crowell,

LAC, PA-1270

Triumphant Canadian soldiers returning from their recent victory at Vimy.

"I couldn't stop my boys going beyond the objective. We had been trained to death about not going past objectives, and here was "C" Company chasing Huns towards the 'Fatherland.'"[24] Before the battle was over, the 85th alone had 56 killed on the field and 282 wounded, many of whom afterwards died, thus making the total casualties over 25 per cent of the battalion's strength.[25]

Battalion Leadership

Although lacking fighting experience, the battalion was fortunate to have very strong leadership at both the company and platoon levels. The courage, pluck, indomitableness and resourcefulness of the officers, NCOs and men of the 85th Battalion at the Battle of Vimy Ridge were instanced not to glorify the battalion, but to show forth the kind of "stuff" that was the spirit of the unit.[26] The soldiers had, through both proper training and time spent together as a formed unit, developed not only respect for, but also faith in, their company officers.

As the second-in-command and the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Phinney was one of the great motivating forces of the unit. During all periods of training, he had shown great executive capacity. Under fire, he demonstrated the same coolness and determination. He displayed great tactical skill and was able to find a ready solution for every problem, however difficult.[27]

In addition, one of the outstanding men of the Canadian Corps in the whole Vimy engagement was Captain Percival W. Anderson. He captured several machine guns and was always in the open inspiring his men by his dauntless courage.[28] A War Diary entry reveals his courage:

> 24/6/17
> Maj PW Anderson* presented with Military Cross by Major General Watson, GOC 4th Canadian Division.

* Acting Major P.W. Anderson was killed in action on 30 October 1917 at Passchendaele while leading "D" Company, after all other company officers were killed on 28 October 1917.

> London Gazette No. 30234 Pt IV, Order 1074 – 17-9-17.
> Capt (Acting Major) Percival William Anderson, 85 Bn NS Highlanders.
>
> For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He led two companies in an attack in face of terrific fire, advancing well ahead when all the other officers had been killed or wounded and inspiring his men to follow. Later, he went over the top, and carried a wounded officer in on his back under a heavy fire. Awarded the Military Cross.

Captain Harvey E. Crowell, while leading his company in the attack, was severely wounded in the shoulder in the early part of the engagement, but he continued to do his duty right in the front line of battle directing and leading his men all night long until the final objective was taken and the company reorganized. He left only after under direct orders from the CO and even then did so under protest.[29]

Lieutenant Hugh A. Crawley, as the only "C" Company officer left, assumed command of the company and proceeded with the utmost coolness and deliberation to organize his defences on the line of consolidation, completing the task with such skill and thoroughness as would have done credit to a seasoned senior officer.[30] The NCOs and men were not a whit behind the officers in courage, independence and resourcefulness.[31] In the end, the War Diary recounts the cost of the achievement:

> 14/4/17
> The Battalion, less C Company, was relieved in its new position by the Warwicks (Warwickshire Regt) about 12.30 pm and marched back to billets at BOUVIGNY HUTS.
>
> Total casualties on the tour (9 to 14 April 1917):
>
> Officers wounded 6
> Other ranks killed 47

Other ranks wounded	116
Other ranks missing	3

Conclusion

Success in battle for an untried unit can be somewhat of a crapshoot – it depends on all of the right factors coming together at the right point in time on the battlefield. It goes without saying that any army and/or unit cannot rely upon "chance and hope" for mission success. It takes training and leadership. Although trust in and familiarity with unit and sub-unit leaders, both officers and senior NCOs, will never ensure victory by themselves, they are invaluable in the maintenance of a unit's pursuit of an objective. Unit cohesiveness combined with this trust will hold together units that may otherwise disintegrate and/or be unable to recuperate/regroup during heavy fire or after a defeat and/or heavy losses.

Another key factor for success is thorough realistic training. It ensures that all likely contingencies can be dealt with. Moreover, an emphasis on initiative down to the lowest level, flexibility and decisiveness, will allow appropriate reactions when all else goes wrong and officers and NCOs are killed or otherwise *hors de combat*. For example, although the expected pre-attack artillery barrage did not materialize for reasons unknown to most of the assaulting forces, the attack was launched and the objective achieved by both assaulting companies of the 85th Battalion, and its progress was maintained despite the fact that officers and NCOs became casualties.

The importance of proper liaison between units, and between units and their headquarters, has been shown to be another critical factor to the success of a mission. A well-trained, well-experienced and well-positioned liaison officer, who understands his CO's intent, together with his own role, can ensure that valuable time is not lost and that the appropriate information is passed in a timely manner to those who need it the most.

None of these points is either new, or a secret prescription to success. However, this case study is an exemplary example of how proper adherence to basic army training and leadership principles, combined with a modicum of common sense, combined with dedicated and responsible leadership, as well as a sound understanding of the importance of a mission, will give even an untested unit the best chances of success.

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CHAPTER 3

Billy Bishop: Leader of Men?
Examining the Leadership Characteristics of Canada's Greatest Air Hero

Richard Goette

As a young pilot officer I passed under the cold blue reviewing eye of Air Vice-Marshal Bishop, VC, DSO, MC, DFC, Croix de Guerre, an experience shared with many thousands of graduates of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. His presence was a visible demonstration to us that our service, as young as it was, had a tradition of high accomplishment.[1]

So wrote S.F. Wise, Second World War Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) pilot and head of the Department of National Defence's Directorate of History, in his Preface to the initial volume of the RCAF's official history, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War*. Yes, William Avery "Billy" Bishop was certainly a hero whom many generations of Canadians have admired. His legacy has endured throughout decades of Canadian air force history, and it is no coincidence that the Canadian Air Force's 1 Canadian Air Division Headquarters in Winnipeg is named after the famous ace from Owen Sound, Ontario. Every year, the air force awards the Air Marshal W.A. Bishop VC Memorial Trophy to an individual "in recognition of outstanding and meritorious achievement in any field of aviation."[2] Indeed, even at Bishop's *alma mater*, the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), will one see the famous Canadian airman's legacy

honoured, for in order to gain access by car to the Canadian Defence Academy, one must drive down Billy Bishop Road.

Bishop was definitely a hero, and his achievements set high standards for those who followed in the cockpits of Canada's warplanes. Yet, Bishop has also been one of the debatable figures of Canadian history. He was brash, cocky and ambitious – characteristics that some would say made him a perfect fighter pilot. Indeed, much ink has been spilled about this Canadian hero and a good deal of it has surrounded Bishop's wartime career and reputation; certainly he is one of the most famous and controversial figures in Canadian military history.

Nonetheless, of all of the articles and books that have been written on Billy Bishop, none have paid particular attention to his leadership characteristics. This chapter will attempt to address this historical void. In so doing, it will also shed light on the issue of operational and tactical air force leadership, and in particular, the leadership characteristics of fighter pilots. This chapter is an objective, academic and analytical examination of the leadership characteristics of Canada's greatest air hero. As such, the issue of Bishop's score and the controversy surrounding the awarding of his Victoria Cross (VC) in 1917 will not be discussed. Instead, this work will focus on Bishop's personal attributes and characteristics and how they affected his leadership capabilities and competency to command. This chapter will supplement the traditional study of air power history that is normally technologically focused. Indeed, as Colonel Randy Wakelam has astutely noted, while technology evolves over the years, "the human element remains constant." Therefore, he continues, "if we are to understand the 'leadership perspectives of aerospace power' then we must first understand the human condition in aerospace combat: we must understand the aviators' experience."[3] One such aviator is Billy Bishop, and his leadership experiences, as we shall see, provide an interesting case study.

To examine Bishop's entire wartime career, spanning both World Wars, would be a far too ambitious undertaking. Therefore, this chapter will explore Bishop's leadership experiences during the

First World War, with specific focus on his time as a flight commander in 60 Squadron Royal Flying Corps (RFC) in 1917 and his short period as commander of 85 Squadron Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1918. An authority on Bishop's First World War career, historian David Bashow has observed that the Canadian pilot was "not a very good commanding officer."[4] Using this as a premise, this chapter will demonstrate that Billy Bishop, Canada's most famous and successful fighter pilot, failed as a leader of men.

This study is divided into two main parts. First, it will provide a brief synopsis of Bishop's life, examining the time period from his birth to his assumption of command of 85 Squadron RAF. Next, an analytical examination of Bishop's time as a flight commander and then a squadron commander on the Western Front during 1917 and 1918 will be offered.

Part I: Biographical Background

The story of Billy Bishop is a familiar one to many Canadians. It has been told elsewhere, but is briefly recounted here in order to provide context for the next section of this study.

Beginnings

Billy Bishop was born on 9 February 1894 in Owen Sound, Ontario. He was the third of four children of Margaret Bishop and Will Bishop, who was a lawyer. Billy was of average size, had fair hair and was notable for his blue eyes. When other boys were participating in team events, Billy preferred individual sports such as swimming, riding his own horse and shooting. He soon became an excellent rider and marksman, skills that would prove valuable over the skies of France later in his life.[5]

In 1911, Bishop passed the Royal Military College's entrance examination and entered the institution that August.[6] Bishop was not an outstanding student and was actually held back a year for cheating on an exam. However, when war broke out in the late-summer of

Photographer Henry Henderson, LAC, PA-203478

William "Billy" Bishop as a young Gentleman Cadet at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston on the eve of war, 1914.

1914, Bishop soon found himself pining to join his fellow RMC classmates who were signing-up for war service. As such, in September, Bishop joined the Mississauga Horse, a cavalry unit from Toronto. However, Bishop was keen to get into action sooner rather than later, so he transferred to the 7th Canadian Mounted Rifles, which was mobilizing in London, Ontario, for active service in France. Aided by his riding and shooting experience, Bishop established himself as one of the best horsemen in the cavalry unit.[7]

Soon Bishop was with the 2nd Canadian Division's mounted reconnaissance squadron, and on 9 June 1915, the unit set sail for England on the vessel *Caledonian*. After a short period in England, Bishop's unit went to the front in France. Bishop did not react well to the horrid conditions of wetness, mud and rats in the trenches, and he soon fell ill. Sent to hospital, Bishop had the fortune to make the acquaintance of a staff officer from the RFC. The man told Bishop of the easier life of the airman and offered him a position as an observer. Bishop accepted the transfer, and on 1 September 1915, he joined 21 Squadron RFC to commence his training.[8]

Aviation, in particular military aviation, had been growing by leaps and bounds since the war had started. Nonetheless, despite rapid technological advances, flying was far from the safest pursuit at that time. Aircraft were still prone to engine and structural failure and the principles of flight were largely still misunderstood. In fact, Bishop survived a number of crashes while training with only minor injuries – but he did survive, and he was by no means deterred from flying.[9] However, he was not content with being an observer, he wanted to be a fighter pilot.

Not surprisingly, Bishop soon submitted his application to become a pilot. Rejected at first, Bishop finally was granted permission to begin training as a pilot in September 1916. His earlier experience as an observer proved to be a crucial asset and he completed his pilot training ahead of schedule. After a stint with a London air defence squadron, Bishop was posted to France to join 60 Squadron on 9 March 1917.[10] The unit's base was at Filescamp Farm, near Arras, and it was here that Bishop's exploits would reach legendary status.

In France as a Fighter Pilot

Bishop's commanding officer (CO) at 60 Squadron was Major Jack Scott. He had been injured in a flying accident earlier in the war and had to walk with the help of crutches. Scott immediately saw promise in the new Canadian pilot and it was under his direction

that Billy Bishop began to distinguish himself as a skilled warrior. On 25 March 1917, Bishop shot down his first enemy aircraft, a German Albatros fighter.[11] Several more were to follow, and Bishop soon began to prove himself as one of the most successful aces of the war.[12]

It was war, and war, as they say, is hell. The war in the skies over France was dangerous and, as one famous pilot memoir noted, the pilot had "no parachute."[13] Historian Ben Greenhous perhaps put the dangerous flying conditions best:

> Under such circumstances, to fly at all required considerable courage; to fly into battle even more. Few men could withstand the anxieties of combat flying for very long, and many a potential ace could not bring himself to fly again after escaping a crash with even minor injuries.[14]

Yet, Bishop not only survived, he excelled at his craft. He quickly became a force to be reckoned with in a dogfight. Historian S.F. Wise observed that Bishop was a better fighter than a pilot.

Canadian Forces Joint Imagery Centre (CFJIC), AH-470A

Bishop in his Nieuport Scout during his time with No. 60 Squadron. As an individualist, he frequently chased after enemy machines, leaving his fellow pilots to fend for themselves.

Bishop was aggressive and he "threw his little Nieuport about with complete abandon and rare tactical sense." Calling on his previous mounted shooting expertise, Bishop became an expert at the deflection shot. His tactics usually depended on surprise – once it was lost, he was usually able to break off combat. Nevertheless, Bishop was offensive minded "and he joined to his skill and drive a relentless courage that impelled him constantly to seek combat."[15]

Bishop had four main qualities that made him a particularly skilled fighter pilot. First, his previous experience as an aerial observer had allowed him to develop "superb vision and an ability to constantly shift focus." This gave him the aptitude to see the enemy before the enemy saw him.[16] Next is what historian Denis Winter has called "spatial instinct" and what we would today call "situational awareness."[17] Such a quality could be compared to Wayne Gretzky's unparalleled intelligence on the ice. Billy Bishop had the ability "to keep in mind the relative positions of every aircraft in the vicinity and work out mentally where they were likely to be in a few moment's time."[18] Third was his accurate shooting skills, and last, but certainly not least, was "a willingness to push his aircraft past its normal limits without worrying too much about the consequences."[19] Jack Scott recognized these attributes and he soon granted Bishop's request for a roving commission, that is, permission to fly alone to search out and destroy enemy aircraft.

With this new freedom, Bishop sometimes flew as far as 40 miles behind enemy lines, covering as much as four times more territory as other pilots. He soon became an expert killer and his score began to rise significantly.[20] This proved to be crucial for 60 Squadron in particular, as the unit had been suffering a 30 percent loss rate at the time. Indeed, "Bloody April" had been a devastating month for the Allies, as losses mounted dramatically in the face of better German machines. The casualty rate during this month increased from an already-high 230 percent to a staggering 600 percent, "which translated to an average of only two month's effective service from each pilot."[21]

CFJIC, PL-9115

Bishop and Lieutenant-Colonel W.G. Barker, two of Canada's greatest fighter aces, pose in front of a captured German airplane. Both men earned a string of decorations including the Victoria Cross.

The British needed heroes to counter the exploits of German aces like Baron Manfred von Richthofen, popularly known as the "Red Baron." For a time, Englishman Albert Ball filled this role, but he was soon killed. Ball's death left Canadian pilot Billy Bishop as the top scoring living ace in the RFC, with 19 kills to his credit. Bishop became the next great aerial hero of the war and he reached even greater heights of popularity and prestige when he carried out an ambitious morning raid on a German airfield on 2 June 1917. For this exploit, Bishop received the VC, the British Empire's highest award for valour.[22]

The results of Bishop's actions boosted morale both in Canada and on the front. He had the courage to fly deep into enemy territory alone to seek him out.[23] Such actions were crucial in 1917. In light of the slaughter of countless masses in the impassable mud of the Western Front for little gain, Allied soldiers recognized Bishop as an *individual* pilot who, in his aircraft, not only achieved free *movement*, but, through his focus on *offence*, achieved actual oper-

ational gains by shooting down enemy aircraft.[24] Bishop represented the individualism that had been lost in the ground war. Indeed, as historian Jonathan Vance has astutely noted, Bishop was indeed "the ultimate individualist during the Great War."[25]

In August 1917, "festooned with even more decorations, Bishop returned to Canada as front-page news."[26] He immediately became the perfect propaganda tool for the Canadian government. That he was so effective in this role was due to "his formidable fighting record, his natural charisma and charm, and a war-weary public's need to be assuaged through heroic example."[27] At the time that Canada was dealing with the conscription crisis, unrestricted submarine warfare and increasing deprivations, Bishop was a hero whom they could celebrate as a welcome tonic to their gloom. On leave, Bishop married his sweetheart, Margaret, and wrote *Winged Warfare*,[28] a book about his exploits to date, some of which the editors embellished for public consumption. It was a bestseller and Bishop made a lot of money.[29]

However, by winter 1918, Bishop's leave was coming to an end. What would he do next? The War Office (WO) posted him to Washington, D.C., as part of the British War Mission, but this was only a temporary assignment. There was also talk that he would return to Britain to become a chief instructor at a new air gunnery school in Scotland, but when this project floundered, Bishop was again without an assignment. The WO soon found what they felt was an ideal job for the famous Canadian ace: Bishop received orders to report to England to take command of a new unit then being formed, Number 85 Fighter Squadron RAF.[30]

Part II: Billy Bishop Leading at the Front

Analytical Frameworks

Before evaluating Billy Bishop's leadership characteristics as a squadron commander, it is first appropriate to establish adequate analytical frameworks from which to make this evaluation. One of

the best studies of leadership at the squadron level is by Dr. Allan English, a professor at Queen's University and the Canadian Forces College, and a Research Associate with the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute (CFLI). In a groundbreaking essay entitled, "The Masks of Command: Leadership Differences in the Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force," English argues that air force culture dictated that the best squadron commanders were "bold, skilled airmen who led by example" and who "carried out their orders intelligently and used their expertise to minimize the risks to the lives of their charges."[31] In other words, he stipulates that an effective squadron commander demonstrated both heroic and technical leadership. Heroic leadership, defined by English, is a "conspicuous sharing of risks with subordinates."[32] Technical leadership is "the ability to influence others to achieve a goal based on the specialized knowledge or skill of the leader." In the air force, such leadership "is exercised by leaders who must be able to... actually do the same job as their subordinates (e.g. pilots)." This kind of leadership is crucial because those who conduct operations "depend on technology, and by extension the technical ability of the crews and their leaders, for their very survival not just their ability to fight."[33] Therefore, English concludes, before a squadron commander could be an effective leader, he had to first demonstrate his operational flying ability (technical leadership) and then share the risks with his subordinates by going on difficult operations (heroic leadership).[34] Billy Bishop was outstanding in his fulfilment of technical leadership requirements, but was less than successful in fulfilling the requirements of heroic leadership.

Another framework relevant to this study is that developed by Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, defence research scientists with Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC).[35] Pigeau and McCann focus on command and define "commander" as "a position/person combination lying on the balanced command envelope with special powers to 1) enforce discipline and 2) put military members in harm's way." They have created a framework that evaluates the competency, authority and responsibility of a commander (i.e. the CAR Structure).[36]

In this structure, they define competency as "the skills and abilities so that missions can be accomplished successfully," and maintain that these abilities fall into four general classes: physical, intellectual, emotional and interpersonal.[37] Authority refers to the commander's domain of influence, and consists of "the degree to which a commander is empowered to act, the scope of this power and the resources available for enacting his or her will." Pigeau and McCann stress that authority comes from two sources that an individual earns by virtue of personal credibility: legal authority (the power to act as assigned by a formal agency, typically the government) and personal authority (given informally to an individual by peers and subordinates).[38] Responsibility consists of "the degree to which an individual accepts the legal and moral liability commensurate with command" and it is made up of two components: extrinsic responsibility and intrinsic responsibility.[39]

Based on the CAR Structure, Pigeau and McCann conclude that effective command demands a balance between competency, authority and responsibility – that the commander must lie on the Balanced Command Envelope (BCE), which is depicted in Figure 3.1.[40]

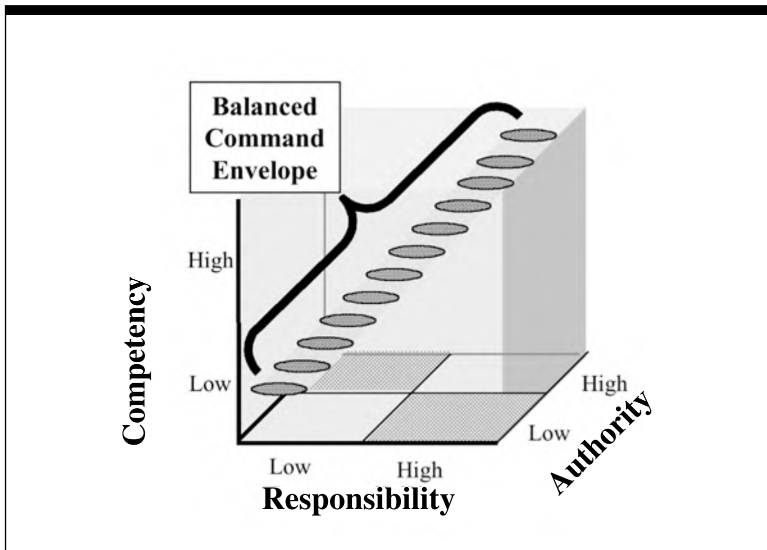

Figure 3.1: Pigeau & McCann's Balanced Command Envelope.[41]

These two research scientists also point out that the military hierarchy consists of commanders at different levels – tactical, operational and strategic – and that they all have varying levels of legal authority (i.e., it increases with rank). Therefore, as Pigeau and McCann explain, if a commander at each level lies within the BCE, "it follows that each must also possess different levels of competency and responsibility."[42] Consequently, they argue, it would be unreasonable to assume that commanders at each level of command capability would have the same combination of competencies.[43]

What appears below, then, is an historical examination of Bishop's career as a leader in air force units with a focus on his technical and heroic leadership characteristics. This will be followed by an assessment using Pigeau and McCann's analytical framework to determine whether Billy Bishop, as a squadron commander, fell within the BCE.

Early Air Force Leadership Experiences

As noted earlier, before becoming a famous fighter pilot, Billy Bishop began his air force career as an observer in two-seater artillery observation aircraft. He soon became very adept at his work and his outstanding vision and situational awareness made him an expert in his field. Recognizing this ability in the young Canadian, in November 1915, Bishop's superiors made him an instructor in the training program for new observers. This was Bishop's first leadership experience. However, he did not react enthusiastically to the task. Bishop, after all, was not adapted to routine discipline and teaching. Not surprisingly, he had mixed emotions about his new assignment. However, this apprehension soon passed and Bishop "eventually gained enthusiasm for the job."[44] Nonetheless, this was not the last instance where Bishop demonstrated his disdain for strict discipline and the administrative tedium of doing paperwork, aspects of higher leadership appointments within a military hierarchy.

CHAPTER 3

Captain Billy Bishop, Flight Commander

Bishop's next major leadership "hurdle" came in March 1917 while he was with 60 Squadron. Impressed with the young pilot's skill in shooting down his first German aircraft, squadron commander Major Jack Scott promoted Bishop to captain and put him in command of the unit's "C" flight.[45] This was a great achievement for the brash youngster from Owen Sound, especially given his relatively short time with the squadron. By shooting down his first "Hun," Bishop had demonstrated to Scott that he had the technical leadership necessary for a greater role in the squadron. By posting Bishop to "C" flight, Scott was giving Bishop the opportunity to develop his heroic leadership abilities.

Bishop's new appointment was not only a significant career achievement for the rising air force star, it was also a very important responsibility. The position of flight commander was crucial in ensuring the squadron's success. Essentially, "all practical matters were in the hands of flight commanders." Famous Canadian fighter ace Raymond Collishaw observed, "if flight commanders were incapable, the squadron commander's job was hopeless."[46] It was the flight commanders who led the squadron's flights into battle, thereby putting them in close proximity "to the sharp end of war," where "competence in survival and killing [was] measurable daily." Most flight commanders seized their responsibility with zeal and pride, "chivvying his flight to early bed if a dawn patrol was imminent or watching their smoking and drinking habits."[47]

The first key to the success of a flight commander, especially one tasked with the job of bringing new pilots into the squadron, was teaching and maintaining proper flying formation.[48] This meant flying together as a tight-knit group and the development of a sense of mutual assurance and security. In the formation, utmost importance was placed on the relationship between the lead pilot and his wingman. As air force officer and historian Dean Black has observed, trust and mutual confidence between these airmen was absolutely essential for both mission success

and life itself. "This cohesion," Black stresses, "reflected the importance of each man sharing equally in the assumption of risk." Fighter pilots were brothers-in-arms and the pilot-wingman relationship made it even closer as each was "prepared to give up their lives for the other."[49] It is therefore not surprising that this kind of group cohesion in general, and the development of a close pilot-wingman relationship in particular, was a key part of Billy Bishop's new responsibilities as a flight commander in March 1917.

There was one problem however. Bishop's individualistic personality and his penchant for lone flying ran counter to his direct responsibilities. Although Major Scott attempted to capitalize on Bishop's skills by making him a wing commander, he also hoped to bring out the young Canadian fighter pilot's potential by granting him a roving commission, which allowed Bishop to fly alone to seek out enemy aircraft.[50] This freedom ended up paying off handsomely for Bishop and 60 Squadron. Bishop excelled in his "lone wolf" sorties, bringing down several German aircraft. In so doing, he increased his own prestige and that of the entire squadron as well. The problem, though, was that Bishop became obsessed with scoring on his own and this caused him to begin to neglect his responsibilities as a flight commander. As David Bashow has noted, Bishop "did not normally take the time to bring subordinates along in their combat evolutions."[51]

On one occasion, Bishop was tasked with providing cover for squadron-mate Sydney Pope who was on a photographic mission. This required operating deep behind enemy lines in an area that was rich with enemy targets. Bishop could not resist, and he peeled off to chase after German prey. As Bashow relates, Pope was infuriated, for when he "looked up for a moment...to his astonishment he found himself absolutely alone and extremely vulnerable."[52] Fortunately for Pope, in this instance, Bishop's "propensity to forage alone at occasionally inappropriate moments"[53] led to no harm. Lieutenant R.B. Clark would not be so lucky.

On 30 April 1917, Bishop was tasked with initiating the new Australian pilot to combat against enemy observation balloons. Shortly after crossing the German lines, Bishop abandoned the novice to seek out German aircraft.[54] Helpless on his own, the result was devastating for Clark, as a member of 60 Squadron recalled:

> He was attacked by three Hun scouts just after firing at the 'gas-bag' [i.e., balloon]. He scrapped them all the way back to the lines, crashing one of them, and holding the other two off. As he crossed the trenches, one of them plugged him in the petrol tank, and his grid caught on fire. As he was only about 50 feet up, he managed to get her down in the shell-holes, or rather a strip of ground between them, without burning himself badly. Luck was all against him, however, as he just tipped over into a trench at the end of his run. A few men who were in an advanced dressing-station near-by quickly came to his rescue, and hauled him clear of the burning wreckage, but the poor devil was by this time badly singed about the legs. He insisted on giving his report before allowing the doctor to attend to his burns, and the men told me afterwards that he was extremely plucky.[55]

The next day Clark died from his wounds in hospital. He had only joined the squadron a few days before.

Bishop had broken the pilot-wingman bond and the young Australian airman under his command had died as a result. This did not reflect well on Bishop's heroic leadership capabilities. Although the Canadian ace *began* the sortie with Clark, he did not complete the mission by *staying* with the young Australian. Instead, Bishop did the complete opposite of heroic leadership: he had left this rookie pilot to his own fate in hostile territory in order to chase personal glory.

To abandon one's comrade in the heat of battle, especially a pilot under one's command, was a serious offence. It was against

accepted squadron practice and it endangered the entire unit's safety and cohesion. Such incidents did not go unnoticed and they definitely put a blemish on a pilot's career. The example of another famous First World War fighter ace, Edward "Mick" Mannock, is illustrative. Early in his flying career, Mannock was serving with 40 Squadron. On one sortie with a colleague by the name of Keen, three German fighters jumped the young pilots. Mannock panicked and abandoned his comrade in order to make a safe getaway. Upon hearing of this incident, the squadron commander sacked Mannock from the unit and transferred him to 74 Squadron "where his reputation followed" him.[56] Although Mannock eventually became one of the greatest aces (even surpassing Bishop's total of 72 victories) and also one of the most outstanding squadron commanders of the war, it took quite a long time for him to shake the negative reputation that he had earned with 40 Squadron.[57]

Although Bishop was clearly guilty of breaking the squadron and flight maxim of staying with one's wingman, it appears that he escaped punishment for the death of R.B. Clark. Although Scott makes reference to Clark's death in his memoir of 60 Squadron, nowhere does he indicate that he blamed Bishop for the young Australian's demise. As such, it was quite likely that Scott took no punitive actions against the brash Canadian fighter pilot. Why was this so? One possibility, although it cannot be authoritatively proven, was that Scott purposely overlooked this incident because he saw it as a small blemish on Bishop's otherwise stellar road to success and fame.

Major Jack Scott himself was an ambitious squadron leader, a man "keen to build his squadron's reputation as an elite unit."[58] In Billy Bishop, Scott saw a feisty young man destined for greatness and he was apparently willing to do all that he could to help the Canadian distinguish himself as a skilled fighter pilot and increase the profile of 60 Squadron. Unlike Mannock's commanding officer in 40 Squadron, Scott was not willing to let one incident tarnish the career of a promising fighter pilot. Besides, as

David Bashow has observed, Bishop's motives were not in question. In fact, it can be argued that Bishop's "propensity to forage alone at occasionally inappropriate moments was probably due more to lapses in judgement than to willful neglect of his peers."[59] Bishop of course had not *intended* to abandon Clark to the German fighters: his intent, to go off alone in order to shoot down enemy aircraft, although misguided in this circumstance, was not completely dishonourable. It appears that Scott realized this and wrote the incident off as a lapse in judgment by a still very young pilot.

Nevertheless, despite motive and intent, what must not be forgotten is that Bishop's task – his responsibility – was to keep a close watch over his charge. His actions were not *willfully* neglectful, but neglectful they were. This did not bode well for Bishop's heroic leadership development in particular and his command potential in general. Richard Townshend Bickers' comments regarding Bishop's penchant for "lone wolf" flying put it best: "[Bishop's] excuse was that he preferred not to have others' lives in his hands: a poor one for a professional officer at any time and for a flight commander hardly a good qualification."[60] Yet, by the time that Bishop went on leave in autumn 1917, he was a national hero, having won a VC for an ambitious lone raid on a German airfield on 2 June. In the RFC, such heroes were few and far between. Bishop was an inspiration to others, so it seemed only natural to give him command of his own squadron.

Taking Command of the "Flying Foxes"

"There was something about him [Bishop]," commented Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, "that left one feeling that he preferred to live as he fought, in a rather hard brittle world of his own."[61] In the spring of 1918, Canadian fighter ace Billy Bishop returned to England to take command of 85 Squadron in the newly formed RAF.[62] Upon arriving in the British Isles, the WO presented the famous airman with over 200 voluntary applications from pilots who desired to serve with Bishop in his new squadron.[63] This situation proved fortuitous for Bishop since, as Denis Winter

has noted, "the first and easiest way of preserving harmony [in a squadron] was for the squadron commander to use his powers in the selection of men."[64] Knowing that he could be picky, Bishop selected a motley collection of pilots whom he could trust and with whom he was sure that his squadron would succeed.

First, Bishop selected all of the flight commanders from his old unit, 60 Squadron. Of these pilots, perhaps Captain Spencer B. "Nigger" Horn was the most important. Horn had been serving in Scotland at the Ayr school for fighter pilots and he suggested that Bishop should take on three of his American pupils, Larry "Cal" Callahan, John MacGavock "Mac" Grider and Elliot White Springs, known as the "Three Musketeers." It was no easy task to secure these US pilots away from the American air service, but Bishop was able to use his great prestige and powers of persuasion to do so.[65] The account from Grider's diary is worth mentioning in detail:

> March 30th
> Captain Horn is a flight commander out there in the squadron that the great Major Bishop, V.C., D.S.O., M.C. is organizing to take overseas. He wants the three of us to go out with him. They are letting Bishop pick his own pilots and he went with us to the U.S. Headquarters to try and arrange it. Col. Morrow said it couldn't be done. The whole staff nearly lost their eyes staring at us when we strolled out, arm and arm with the great Bishop....
>
> April 6th
> The dirty deed is done. Springs came out here mad as a hornet because they told him at the Yard that he was no good and would have to have some more instructions before he could go overseas. He didn't tumble at all and insisted that he was a damn good pilot and offered to prove it. But they had a report on him that was unsatisfactory so sent him out here. He didn't find out until he got to Hounslow that Bishop had had that report sent in. Now go grab off Cal as he passes through....[66]

The final group of pilots that Bishop gathered for 85 Squadron were, in the words of Bishop's biographer Dan McCaffery, "a curious collection of greenhorns and old pros."[67] Besides the American "Three Musketeers," the group also included six Canadians (including Bishop himself), six Englishmen, two New Zealanders, two Scots, two Australians, one Irishman and one South African. If not a conscious consideration, it was an admirable attempt on Bishop's part to have representation from many English-speaking nations in the Empire.[68] Upon gathering them together, Bishop announced to his new squadron-mates that every pilot who scored two or more kills would be permitted to attach a foxtail to the struts of their aircraft. As such, the multinational group quickly became known as the "Flying Foxes." Having been personally hand-picked by the famous Canadian ace, the new pilots of 85 Squadron "worshipped Bishop."[69] Although Bishop's reputation as a fantastic fighter pilot had preceded him, his reputation as a poor leader of men at the front had not. Therefore, the hero worship did not last.

Before being posted to France, the newly formed 85 Squadron had to undergo a period of training in England. Bishop had the difficult task of moulding his new gaggle of pilots into a cohesive team and to ensure "the creation of a corporate unity, a team feeling, a bonding of the eighteen or twenty-four men of the fighter squadron's strike force."[70] This required tight formation flying, but it also necessitated a great degree of bonding with his mates. As such, it was crucial for a new squadron commander to cultivate "an eccentric flamboyance" that made a squadron commander an authority "which made such great demands of fighting men; a man whose vividness made him a slightly frightening figure like a dangerously volatile headmaster."[71]

It was also crucial that this "dangerously volatile headmaster" not be an overly strict disciplinarian. As Lord Balfour, himself a veteran fighter pilot of the First World War, asserted, "...for always a commanding officer must be able to be a boy amongst boys if he is to play his part uttermost."[72] As a consequence,

"spit-and-polish" squadron commanders who trumpeted the traditional army attitude of strict and rigid discipline, and who refused to "unbend and play," did not succeed long in air force squadrons.[73] Yes, there had to be discipline, but it could not get in the way of a squadron commander's requirement to bond with his pilots. Billy Bishop understood this, perhaps a little too well. In several accounts of 85 Squadron's time training in England, there are examples of high jinks, aerial stunting, drunken foolishness and immature horseplay. Bishop took part in most, if not all, of these incidents; in fact, the young Canadian squadron commander initiated several of them himself.

For example, the new squadron had rented a house in Berkley Square in London from an English lord. After moving in, they had a big party. The drinking started immediately, and by the time they had completed the main course, the pilots "were chasing each other all over the place."[74] Then the young airmen stumbled onto the lord's collection of ancient weapons. The pilots decided to attend the theatre that night, but before departing, "these ruffians armed themselves with swords, machetes, shillelaghes, maces, clubs, bayonets, sabers, pikes, flintlock pistols and various daggers and dirks."[75] Looking "like an arsenal," the drunken airmen set out to paint the town. "It was an incredible scene," described Dan McCaffery, "nineteen of the king's officers, including a Victoria Cross winner, wallowing drunkenly in the streets of London, brandishing axes, spears and war clubs."[76]

They finally made it to the theatre, weapons and all. One of the pilots clumsily dropped a club on a bass drum during the show, while another almost fell out of the balcony box, his colleagues having to reach over and pull him back. As Grider noted in his diary the next day, "It's a wonder they weren't all arrested."[77] As a matter of fact, the airmen had to be escorted out of the theatre by London bobbies. They would have been arrested had not Bishop displayed a decent act of leadership. He explained to the policemen that the airmen were only having a little bit of fun before heading out to the front and this saved the young pilots from a night in a jail cell.[78]

Another instance of rowdy behaviour by 85 Squadron revolved around their flying training before leaving for France. Throughout the war, stunting had been a part of training. Although training instructors did not officially advocate the practice, there was an inherent expectation of a pupil to stunt in order to prove himself capable as a pilot and to inculcate "offensive spirit." This "right of passage" was a rather crude way of separating the wheat from the chaff, and in several cases, it resulted in serious injury to the pilot, even death.[79]

Bishop led his squadron in a WO ordered refresher course, but these training flights in the English countryside soon "degenerated into a series of wild barnstorming displays, with pilots often terrorizing the civilian population."[80] One incident, an afternoon flight described in John Grider's diary, is in particular worth noting:

> The three of us [i.e., the three Americans, Girder, Springs and Callahan] and Nigger [Horn] flew up to Maidenhead to call this afternoon. We ground-straffed the place and chased everybody off the terrace at Kindles. Vic was down there and fell off a haystack watching us. Then we steeplechased all the way back down the river and kept our wheels just out of the water. Nigger dipped his [landing gear] once. Cal [Callahan] missed hitting a bridge by inches and Springs landed with about two hundred feet of telephone wire dragging on his undercarriage.[81]

The flyers then happened upon a man and a woman in a boat on a river. The pilots dove their aircraft straight at the couple, causing the man to fall out of the boat, where he was last seen "floundering about in a regular whirlpool."[82]

Upon their return to the aerodrome, the pilots were met by an RAF colonel "flanked on either side by hulking military policemen." The man that they had forced out of the boat was in fact a cabinet member and a close personal friend of Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Having almost drowned, the man was furi-

ous and he demanded the immediate arrest of the airmen and a full inquiry into the incident. Once again, Billy Bishop took charge of the situation and saved his squadron mates from serious reprimand. The Canadian squadron leader did some investigating of his own and discovered that the lady in the boat with the cabinet member was not in fact his wife. Faced with this revelation, the cabinet member decided to drop his demands.[83]

The way that Bishop stuck up for his men in these two instances definitely helped him develop the "eccentric flamboyance" that Denis Winter insisted was one of the crucial characteristics of a successful squadron commander. It certainly helped bring the squadron closer together and it was an important element in Bishop's development as a leader. The problem, though, was that Bishop failed to foster these characteristics when the squadron was finally posted to the front in the latter part of May 1918. He still took a leading role in the mess and ensured that his pilots were able to relax and forget the strain of operational flying. The horseplay and heavy drinking continued, as they formed an important part of this "officers' mess" culture which was crucial to maintaining a close bond and high morale.[84] However, a squadron commander was also expected to fulfil operational flying leadership roles, and it was here that Bishop failed.

Leading at the Front

Bishop's skills as a fighter pilot were never in doubt and he was indeed of great inspirational value in encouraging courage and tenacity. As historian David Bashow has noted, Bishop's "press-on" spirit definitely was a "tremendously stabilizing force and an example for others."[85] However, by 1918, pilots were much better trained than they had been in previous years. Under the new, groundbreaking "Gosport" training scheme devised by Major R.R. "Bob" Smith-Barry, pilots "went to the front with greater knowledge of their machines and more understanding of the dynamics of flight."[86] Along with greater knowledge also came greater expectations of squadron leadership in the field. Unfortunately for 85 Squadron, Billy Bishop did not fulfil this expectation.

Although Bishop was "a social lion," the Canadian fighter ace, in Bashow's words, was "not a very good commanding officer, since he was too self-absorbed with personal ambition."[87] Bishop enjoyed the prestige of being in command, but he abhorred the paperwork that came along with it. Arthur Bishop wrote of his father that the paperwork "was the part of his duties that irked him the most, and he used to say that an hour of administration tired him more than several hours in the air."[88] David Baker goes further, emphasizing Bishop's motives for choosing specific men to make up 85 Squadron: "Billy did not want to be embroiled in the day to day administration any more than he had to and good men around him would relieve him of that burden."[89] Bishop was still an old-fashioned fighter pilot who was most comfortable alone in his aircraft, searching for prey over the skies of France.

As such, it is not surprising that upon his arrival in France, Bishop almost immediately returned to his "lone wolf" sorties, flying off on his own again searching for opportunities to improve his score.[90] Although he initially ensured that his pilots were ready for combat and began leading them into battle,[91] Bishop soon abandoned this practice. Before the squadron had left for France, Margaret had made the other pilots "promise to stick to the major and not let a Hun get on his tail."[92] The problem was that Bishop was not giving them the opportunity to fulfil this promise. More and more, he began going on lone patrols, leaving his flight commanders to take up pilots in group sorties.[93] Illustrative is the recollections from one 85 Squadron pilot, Tommy Williams:

> The truth is, he wasn't a particularly good leader of men. He seldom led a patrol and he did his best work while he was alone. Nigger Horn was the unofficial leader of the squadron. Everyone knew that Bishop should never have been given his own command.[94]

Damning words, but, unfortunately for Bishop, accurate ones as well.

In one instance, Bishop's indiscretion led to the death of one of his men. Writing to Margaret on 30 May, Bishop stated his concern that Captain Arthur "Lobo" Benbow had not yet returned from a flight earlier that evening.[95] The next day his fears were confirmed: Benbow had been shot down by the enemy.[96] Grider extrapolated in his diary a couple of days later. "No one knows exactly what happened," he wrote, "but Archie [anti-aircraft gunners] called up and said they saw him coming out of Hunland [i.e., German-Occupied France] with five Huns on his tail." He explained further, "Just as he got to the line two of them fired a burst and his plane dived into the ground on our side of the lines and he was killed."[97] Benbow never should have been given permission to go on such a dangerous mission alone.

Although Benbow was a skilled fighter pilot and a veteran flight leader (he had been awarded the Military Cross),[98] the air war had advanced to such a state by 1918 that even for an experienced airman like Benbow, it was extremely treacherous to fly alone. With numerous groups of aircraft, such as Baron von Richthofen's "Flying Circus" hovering at various heights in the battle zone, a solitary aircraft attracted immediate attention. Solo sorties were therefore usually frowned upon for fear of pilots being "jumped" by swarms of German aircraft. Only the most skilled pilots, such as Bishop himself, dared to attempt solo hunting. In fact, even the great French ace René Fonck (he ended up as the highest scoring Allied pilot of the war) dared not venture into the skies in 1918 without a wingman to watch his back.[99]

That Bishop himself survived his solo sorties during this period is nothing short of incredible and is a testament to his outstanding skills as a fighter pilot. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that Bishop should have known better than to permit Benbow to fly alone. No longer was it realistic for a squadron commander to grant roving commissions to individual pilots as Jack Scott had done for Bishop in 1917. Simply put, as a squadron commander in 1918, Bishop had the authority to go off on "lone wolf"

sorties himself if he wanted, but he also had the responsibility of a leader to exercise good judgment and forbid his charges from doing the same.

The squadron was devastated by Benbow's death, as it was its first. They had considered him "a fine fellow"[100] and they wanted to pay their respects to their fallen comrade. Bishop, however, would have nothing of it. He forbade any of his officers from attending Benbow's funeral because it would be "too upsetting" for them.[101] Bishop was worried about the effect that the funeral would have on squadron morale. Although well-intentioned, it was not well received by squadron members who "grumbled that it was heartless to let Benbow be buried and mourned only by strangers."[102] This would not be the end of 85 Squadron's grumbling.

Steadily throughout May and June 1918, Bishop's popularity with his men began to decline. His refusal to allow them to attend Benbow's funeral was one obvious sore point, but his lopsided score in comparison to the entire squadron total became an object of scorn, especially because most of these kills had come during Bishop's famous "lone wolf" patrols. Besides more grumbling, this issue led some airmen to copy their leader by going out on their own lone missions despite the danger that this entailed.[103] On 4 June, a similar incident occurred, although this time the result was not so lethal.

Against the advice of Captain Horn, one of the American pilots, Elliot Springs, set out on yet another lone sortie. He immediately ran into six German fighters. "They chased him all over the sky and he had a time getting away from them," Grider recorded in his diary. In a fit of desperation, Springs went into a dangerous steep dive in a attempt to escape. An aircraft reached tremendous speeds during such dives and such was the rickety construction of machines at the time that quite often the wings would sheer right off. Fortunately for Springs, the aircraft that he was flying that day was sturdy enough and he pulled out of the dive safely,

although he "tore all the fabric loose on his wing top."[104] Upon landing, Springs was still in a state of shock and he ran his aircraft right into his commanding officer's machine. Bishop immediately confronted the young American pilot, "but Springs walked up to him and ran his finger across his row of ribbons and said, 'You see these medals?' Bish[op] nodded. 'Well,' says Springs, 'I just want to tell you that you are welcome to them!'"[105] He then stormed off to the officers' mess for a drink. Although Bishop laughed off this incident, he still did little to counter the growing disdain that the men in his squadron were feeling towards him.

Wing Headquarters was beginning to notice the problems in 85 Squadron as well. In particular, they had grown worried about the lack of discipline in the unit. Arthur Bishop, the ace's son, has written that his father was "quite possibly, the most lenient squadron commander in the Royal Air Force in the matter of what his men did in their spare time."[106] Bishop still fulfilled the squadron commander's role as the lead prankster in the officer's mess, but the problem was that it seemed that he let the horseplay go too far, even for an RAF fighter squadron. Although it was not prudent for a squadron commander to be of the rigid "spit-and-polish" type, there was some consternation at Wing Headquarters that Bishop was far too lax in his discipline. This factor, added with Bishop's predilection to go off on his own and the increasing grumbling within 85 Squadron, led Wing Headquarters to report the situation directly to the WO. Concerned about the well-being of the squadron, the RAF brass decided that it was time for Bishop to move aside and make way for a new squadron commander.[107]

Bishop's value as Canada's most popular and famous fighter ace could be better utilized in other exploits. As such, the Canadian government reassigned Bishop, placing him in charge of the effort to create a separate Canadian air force. The news hit the young squadron commander hard. "I have never been so furious in my life," Bishop wrote to Margaret.[108] Undaunted, he immediately set out to leave the front in a blaze of glory. He proceeded to shoot down a remarkable ten aircraft in three days, including an out-

standing five in twelve minutes during his last operational flight.[109] However, once he landed, it was all over for he would never again hold an operational command.

William Avery "Billy" Bishop was not a good squadron commander for he was not a good leader of men. A lone and skilled fighter pilot, he was, remembering Jonathan Vance's words, "the ultimate individualist during the Great War."[110] He was of a different type. David Baker perhaps put it best: "The RAF still needed men like Billy Bishop," he conceded, "but it could not afford to let them loose in a pack of young, impressionable neophytes.... Bishop belonged to the old school and there were fewer and fewer of them.... He had nothing to regret but he was not able to bridge the very different roles of lone hunter and squadron commander."[111] Clearly Bishop was not the right fit for 85 Squadron. If so, then who was?

The WO hoped to replace Bishop with someone "who could take on No. 85 and mould it into a tight, disciplined, fighting force."[112] At first they had high-scoring ace Captain James B. McCudden in mind. However, this choice was not popular with 85 Squadron. As Bishop noted to Margaret, when the pilots got wind of this possibility, they were "livid" and "on the verge of mutiny."[113] One reason for the squadron's consternation regarding McCudden was that he had a reputation for being very "regimental" and a tough disciplinarian, very different from Bishop's easygoing command style.[114]

The other reason was strikingly similar to one of the key reasons for the squadron's growing dislike of Bishop's leadership. As Grider wrote, "The General came over and had tea with us and asked us who we wanted for C.O. He wanted to send us McCudden but we don't want him. He gets Huns himself but he doesn't give anybody else a chance at them."[115] McCudden indeed had a reputation as being "ruthless, ambitious, [and] unwilling to share," and 85 Squadron wanted someone who could teach them how to be an efficient fighting unit, and at the same time, not carry too heavy a stick. Therefore, they asked for – and received – Major Edward "Mick" Mannock as their new squadron commander.

Mannock was a one-eyed Irishman who at that time was a flight commander in 74 Squadron. He was every bit the leader of men that Billy Bishop was not. Although Mannock's radical socialist beliefs were a questionable characteristic, he proved to be an outstanding leader in the field. His technical leadership characteristics were impressive. He was an outstanding, high-scoring ace in his own right, but that was not all. He was also a student of aerial warfare, and quite often he could be found with a pencil, paper and protractor devising new tactics. His heroic leadership characteristics were also outstanding. He constantly led his men into battle, and he also sought to train young pilots well, striving as best as he could to improve their confidence. In fact, it was not uncommon for him to even go so far as to set up kills for novice airmen by driving enemy aircraft into the young pilot's sights.[116] Grider also noted Mannock's strong leadership characteristics. "They say that he's the best patrol leader at the front," he commented, "[he] plans his squadron shows a day in advance and rehearses them on the ground." Grider added, "He plans every manoeuver like a chess player and has every man at a certain place at a certain time to do a certain thing."[117] Furthermore, Mannock expected a full effort from each of his pilots and he "raise[d] merry hell if any one falls down on his job."[118]

Understanding how badly the squadron needed his particular morale and leadership skills, Mannock "brightened up 85 considerably."[119] He immediately set about improving the situation. Soon after arriving, he gathered all of the pilots together to discuss his plans for the squadron and his expectations of each airman. He then outlined a comprehensive trap for the Germans in which he and a few other pilots were to act as decoys, while the remainder of the squadron pounced on the unsuspecting Hun. Put into play a few days later, the plan worked beautifully and several pilots scored kills. None of 85 Squadron aircraft or pilots was lost.[120]

The squadron worshipped their new leader. "Mick is a master," Grider wrote. They especially appreciated Mannock's attention to

detail. Taking Larry Callahan under his wing, Mannock taught the American pilot everything that he knew about the German enemy. By the time he was done, in Grider's words, whenever Callahan and Mannock engaged the enemy, they knew "what the Huns had for breakfast."[121] It was therefore no surprise that 85 Squadron was devastated when Mannock was shot down and killed on 20 July 1918. "Mannock is dead, the greatest pilot of the war," wrote Grider. "But," the American pilot astutely continued, "his death was worthy of him."[122] Mannock had taken one of his novice pilots up "to get him a Hun" in order to boost the young airman's confidence. In true form, Mannock had lured a helpless German two-seater aircraft right into the novice's crosshairs. It was an easy kill for the young pilot, and the two had started back to base flying at low altitude when, just like the Red Baron, Mannock fell victim to enemy anti-aircraft fire.[123] He was awarded a posthumous VC. Mannock was the type of squadron commander that the RAF had hoped Bishop would be. Given this context, then, it is now fitting to evaluate Billy Bishop as a squadron commander by utilizing Pigeau and McCann's analytical framework.

Assessing Billy Bishop's Competency, Authority and Responsibility as a Squadron Commander

Using the Pigeau – McCann model, the following assessment of Billy Bishop's competency, authority and responsibility as a squadron commander is offered:

Competency:

Physical: **high**. Bishop was an outstanding and very talented fighter pilot. Although he has been called a better fighter than a pilot, Bishop's high score of enemy kills is a testament to his excellent skills.

Intellectual: **moderate to low**. Individually, Bishop was a very intelligent pilot. He had a unique gift for situational awareness and he easily applied this ability to become one of the most suc-

cessful aces of the First World War. However, when leading others, Bishop failed in his intellectual competencies. On active patrols, he occasionally did not stick to planned sorties and he oftentimes abandoned his comrades to chase after prey on his own. In one case, this directly led to the death of one of his colleagues. As a squadron commander, he often made the mistake of permitting his pilots to fly dangerous lone patrols in enemy-infested skies. In these cases, therefore, Bishop clearly did not assess risks properly, nor did he practice good judgment.

Emotional: **high**. Bishop performed brilliantly under stress while in combat. Whereas other pilots would have "burned out" in this situation, Bishop excelled. He did not go unscathed from the ravages of emotional stress, but he did not let it overtake him and affect his flying – and killing – efficiency. If there is one negative aspect of Bishop's emotional competencies, it was his questionable and controversial decision to forbid his squadron to attend Captain Benbow's funeral.

Interpersonal: **initially high, but eventually low**. While working-up his squadron in England, Bishop led them both in the air and on the ground. He was a leader and instigator of several acts of horseplay and stunting, but these were crucial in allowing him to foster unit cohesion and a sense of togetherness and brotherhood within 85 Squadron. Furthermore, when squadron members got in trouble for their antics, Bishop was quick to use his prestige and influence to defend them and to ensure no reprimands were awarded. However, upon arriving at the front, Bishop's interpersonal competencies began to decline. Although he continued to lead "in the officers' mess," his poor questionable practices in the field led squadron members to dislike him. Bishop's refusal to allow pilots to attend their comrade's funeral, his growing absence from group missions and his preference for "lone wolf" sorties stand out particularly in this regard. Not only did Bishop let down his comrades in 85 Squadron, he also disappointed his superiors and they transferred him as a result.

Authority

Legal Authority: For a squadron commander, Bishop exercised rather **high** legal authority. In the latter half of the First World War, squadron commanders exercised a significant amount of freedom from their Wing Headquarters. This authority came under the RFC 1915 Standing Order in which it was not expected that a wing commander would get overly involved in a squadron, leaving that authority in the hands of the squadron commander.[124] Added to this were certain expectations piled upon Bishop due to the fact that he was a famous and influential hero. Although these expectations were not necessarily "officially" sanctioned, they did come from "higher up," and they thus gave Bishop a greater degree of authority. As Bishop's son Arthur has noted, the Canadian ace "enjoy[ed] the fruits of authority,"[125] and he used it to good effect to defend his pilots when they got into trouble with the law in England.

Personal Authority. As with Bishop's interpersonal competencies, his personal authority was **at first high, but then declined significantly**. At first, Bishop's "press-on" spirit inspired others and was a huge boost to morale, not only to his men, but also to society in general. However, as noted above, his actions while in command in France had a decidedly negative effect on the personal authority that he had with his pilots in 85 Squadron.

Responsibility

Extrinsic responsibility: **moderate to low**. By posting the Empire's greatest ace to command a squadron, the WO had placed a great responsibility on Bishop to fulfil the public's (and their) expectations to succeed. Unfortunately, although Bishop initially sought to make his squadron an elite unit, his penchant for lone hunting meant that 85 Squadron did not operate as efficiently as it could have. The squadron did score a number of enemy kills, but it should not be forgotten that Bishop tallied most of them himself,

thereby leading to a lopsided squadron total. In sum, Bishop was well-intentioned at first, but his inherent individualism debilitated against this.

Intrinsic Responsibility: **low**. Unfortunately, Bishop failed in his obligation to the "military mission." Instead of focusing on the success of the squadron as a whole, his emphasis on the "military mission" more often than not centered more on his personal drive to increase his kill score.

In sum, Billy Bishop's Competency, Authority and Responsibility capabilities were rather low for a squadron commander. Indeed, so disjointed were they that it is safe to conclude that Bishop was not on the Balanced Command Envelope.

Conclusion

William Avery "Billy" Bishop was not a good leader of men. He did not lie on the BCE and he did not succeed as the commander of 85 Squadron RAF. Bishop's technical leadership capabilities were never in question, but his heroic leadership capabilities, although promising at first, never really developed sufficiently to make him a good operational leader.

However, although Bishop was not a good leader of men, he was a valuable leader in other regards. Indeed, the citation for his Distinguished Flying Cross, awarded for his service with 85 Squadron, illuminates this fact:

> For the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross now bestowed upon him he has rendered signally valuable services in personally destroying twenty-five enemy machines in twelve days, five of which he destroyed on his last day of service at the front. The total number of machines destroyed by this distinguished officer is seventy-two, and his value as a morale factor in the Royal Air Force cannot be overestimated.[126]

The last line is significant: Billy Bishop's greatest value was found in the significant contribution of propaganda and morale that he made to the Allied war effort. As such, it can be suggested that Bishop was an outstanding leader of causes and/or institutions.

Indeed, other factors had also played a part in Bishop's removal from 85 Squadron. Although Bishop's failure as a squadron commander was the main reason, as David Bashow has noted, "those in power in Canada were really afraid they would lose him; they were especially concerned about the associated detrimental effect [that his capture or death] would have on national morale."[127] Such was Bishop's prestige and importance to Allied propaganda and morale that he was more valuable to the war effort alive in England or Canada than dead in France or Belgium. The death of Bishop's successor, Mannock, illustrates this point rather vividly.

The Canadian government in particular hoped to capitalize on Bishop's popularity by putting him at the head of the campaign to form a separate all-Canadian air force.[128] It was a cause that Bishop had always favoured and he seized it with zeal. He stressed that "the Wing would implant magnificent *espirit de corps*, as well as a heightened appreciation by the Canadian public for the work of those [Canadians] at present 'lost in the RAF.'"[129] Buoyed with Bishop's influence, the cause claimed its first success when the RAF agreed in August 1918 to establish an all-Canadian Wing consisting initially of one fighter and one bomber squadron. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel, Bishop was tasked to begin organizing this unit and it was only the ending of the war on 11 November that prevented its completion. Nevertheless, it was a significant achievement for Canadian aviation, as it eventually formed the basis of the Canadian Air Force and, in 1924, the RCAF.[130]

Nor was this the end of Bishop's important role as a leader of causes/institutions. Indeed, throughout the inter-war period and the Second World War, Bishop continued to take leading advocacy roles on a variety of issues related to air power and morale. As

Johnathan Vance has demonstrated in his book *High Flight*, during the 1920s and 1930s, Bishop took a leading role in advancing aviation and "air-mindedness" amongst Canadians.[131] In addition, in a series of newspaper articles in the mid-to-late 1930s, Bishop also sought to educate Canadians about the potential destructive effect of air power, arguing that a strong air force was required to counter such a threat.[132] The famous Canadian airman also served as a government-appointed member of the Honourary Air Advisory Board, which was tasked "to provide the government with an independent source of advice on air force matters."[133]

As war clouds gathered in the late 1930s, Bishop donned the uniform again for his country. Air Vice-Marshal – and then Air Marshal – Billy Bishop (both honourary titles) proved to be a key asset to the Canadian war effort. In the words of one of his colleagues, Bishop was "the RCAF's No. 1 salesman."[134] Using his vast array of connections, he played a crucial and leading role in the formation of the Clayton Knight Committee, which brought thousands of American men to train in Canada to serve in the RAF and RCAF before the United States officially entered the

Photographers Pringle & Booth, LAC, C-3538.

Air Marshal Bishop saluting an air cadet march past, 1942.

war.[135] Bishop also played a key role in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) as Director of Recruiting. He tirelessly travelled throughout Canada, giving speeches,[136] attending parades and awarding wings to new pilots.[137] As S.F. Wise's statements at the beginning of this study indicated, Bishop's prestigious presence was indeed impressive, and the famous First World War ace definitely inspired yet another generation of Canadian airmen.

Notably, Billy Bishop never held an operational command in the RCAF during this time.[138] Such an appointment would not have been a proper use of his talents and the Canadian government understood this. In essence, Bishop's leadership value was not as an operational commander, but rather as a leader of causes/institutions.

Endnotes

1 S.F. Wise, *Canadian Airmen and the First World War: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Volume I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press [UTP] and the Department of National Defence [DND], 1980), xv.

2 "Air Force," *Maple Leaf*, Vol. 8, No. 7, 16 February 2005, available online at http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/community/MapleLeaf/html_files/html_view_e.asp?page=vol8-07airforce#e1, accessed 6 March 2005.

3 Allan D. English, *The Cream of the Crop: Canadian Aircrew 1939-1945* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 8; Colonel Randall Wakelam, "Aerospace Power And Leadership Perspectives: The Human Dimension," *Canadian Military Journal* [*CMJ*], Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn 2003), 17. Quotation from Wakelam.

4 Lieutenant-Colonel David Bashow, "The Incomparable Billy Bishop: The Man and the Myths," *CMJ*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 2002), 57.

5 Brereton Greenhous, *The Making of Billy Bishop: The First World War Exploits of Billy Bishop, VC* (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2002), 29-30.

6 J. Ross McKenzie, "The Real Case of no. 943 William Avery Bishop," unpublished RMC paper, copy in file 90/91, DND, *Directorate of History and Heritage* [*DHH*].

7 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 33-34.

8 Ibid., 37.

9 Jonathan F. Vance, *High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2002), 45-46; Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 13-15.

10 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 45-55.

11 William Arthur Bishop, *The Courage of the Early Morning: A Son's Biography of a Famous Father, the Story of Billy Bishop* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965), 5-6.

12 An ace is a pilot who has shot down five or more enemy aircraft.

13 Air Vice-Marshal Arthur Gould Lee, *No Parachute: A Fighter Pilot in World War I* (London: Jarrold's Publishers Ltd., 1968).

14 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 13-14.

15 Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 404-406.

16 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 69-70.

17 Denis Winter, *The First of the Few: Fighter Pilots of the First World War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983), 136.

18 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 69-70.

19 Ibid.

20 David Bashow, *The Knights of the Air: Canadian Fighter Pilots and the First World War* (Toronto: McArthur & Company, 2000), 114.

21 In the four weeks ending 27 April, British aerial casualties "amounted to 238 killed or missing and 19 wounded." See Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 65-66, 81.

22 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113-117.

23 Brereton Greenhous, "Billy Bishop – Brave Flyer, Bold Liar," *CMJ*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn 2002), 61; Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113.

24 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 117, 119.

25 Vance, *High Flight*, 275.

26 Bashow, "Incomparable Billy Bishop," 57.

27 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 127.

28 Major William A. Bishop, *Winged Warfare* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart Publishers, 1918).

29 Bashow, "Incomparable Billy Bishop," 57; Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 16. In an article in the *Globe & Mail* just before his death, Bishop noted his disdain for *Winged Warfare*. It was, he reminisced, "a terrible book. It is so terrible I cannot read it today. It turns my stomach. It was headline stuff, whoop-de-doop, red-hot, hurray-for-our-side stuff." "Yet," he added, "the public loved it." See Richard J. Doyle, "They Called Bishop's Hell's Handmaiden and Said He Was Half the Air Force," *The Globe & Mail*, 12 September 1956, 5.

30 W.D. Mathieson, *Billy Bishop, VC* (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd., 1989), 37; David Baker, *William Avery 'Billy' Bishop: The Man and the Aircraft He Flew* (London: Outline Press, 1990), 93-95; Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 131-135.

31 Allan English, "The Masks of Command: Leadership Differences in the Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force," paper prepared to the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society Conference, 25-27 October 2002, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 14.

32 Ibid., 6. English bases this definition on British historian Sir John Keegan's perspective on leadership in *The Mask of Command*. In this book, Keegan argues that by sharing risks, leaders cultivate a kinship between themselves and their followers, giving leaders "the moral legitimacy, beyond their legal authority, that they must have to be successful." See English, "Masks of Command," 6; Sir John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc.), 10. Quotation from English.

33 English, "Masks of Command," 6-7.

34 Ibid., 17.

35 Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann, "What is a Commander?," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral: Perspectives on Canadian Senior Military Leadership* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 79-104.

36 Ibid., 91 and 83.

37 Physical competency consists of a commander's physical abilities that are mandatory for any operational task, such as flying an aircraft. Intellectual competency consists of skills and abilities that are necessary for "planning missions, monitoring the situation, for reasoning, making inferences, visualizing the problem space, assessing risks and making judgements." Emotional competency consists of the skills of resilience, hardiness and the ability to cope under stress, that is to say, emotional "toughness." Interpersonal competency consists of skills of interaction, trust, respect and effective teamwork and requires "articulateness, empathy, perceptiveness and social understanding on the part of the individual in command." See Ibid., 84-85.

38 Pigeau and McCann note that legal authority is significant for the military, going "well beyond [the legal authority assigned to] any other private or government or organization." This is so because the legal authority that a military has allows it to "enforce obedience among its members" and "to place these members in harm's way if the operational needs of the mission demand it." See Ibid., 85.

39 Extrinsic responsibility "involves the obligation for public accountability" while intrinsic responsibility "is the degree of self-generated obligation that one feels towards the military mission." See Ibid., 86-87.

40 Ibid., 91-95; Brigadier-General (ret'd) G.E. (Joe) Sharpe and Allan D. English, *Principles for Change in the Post-Cold War Command and Control of the Canadian Forces* (Winnipeg: Canadian Forces Training Material Production Centre, 2002), xv.

41 Source of Figure 3.1: Pigeau and McCann, "What is a Commander?," 91.

42 Pigeau and McCann, "What is a Commander?," 95.

43 Ibid., 95. For application of the Pigeau and McCann framework in examinations of a compromised command environment, see Angelo Caravaggio, "A Re-evaluation of Generalship: Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds and Major-General George Kitching in Normandy 1944," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Autumn 2002), 5-19, and, Richard Goette, "The Leadership of an Operational Commander: A Study of the Career of Rear Admiral L.W. Murray, RCN," Unpublished Canadian Forces Leadership Institute Research Paper, 2004.

44 Mathieson, *Billy Bishop, VC*, 16.

45 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 51; Richard Townshend Bickers, *The First Great Air War* (Toronto: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), 201. A flight usually consisted of six aircraft.

46 Winter, *First of the Few*, 69. Winter argued flights were "units in which the relation of subaltern or senior NCO to men was often tinged with the passionate protectiveness which togetherness in battle gave."

47 Ibid., 69.

48 Ibid., 70.

49 Dean C. Black, "Murder by Spitfire? Probing for Mutiny and Indiscipline in Canada's Second World War Air Force," Paper prepared for the Second Annual McGill-Queen's Graduate Student Conference in History, 18-19 March 2005, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 7. I am indebted to Dean Black for providing a copy of his paper.

50 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 69-70.

51 Bashow, "The Incomparable Billy Bishop," 56.

52 Dan McCaffery, *Billy Bishop Canadian Hero* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1988), 69; Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113. Quotation from Bashow.

53 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113.

54 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 69; Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113. In *Winged Warfare*, Bishop wrote that upon seeing German aircraft, he "dived...steeply after an enemy machine which suddenly appeared beneath me." As to the flight that he was leading, Bishop noted, "the remainder of the patrol lost me completely" and "the patrol had disappeared." See Bishop, *Winged Warfare*, 137.

55 Quoted in Group-Captain A.J.L. Scott, *Sixty Squadron R.A.F.: A History of the Squadron 1916-1919* (London: Greenhill Books, 1920, 1990), 48-49.

56 Winter, *First of the Few*, 176.

57 Abandoning one's colleagues in the heat of battle, however, was not just limited to fighter pilots of the First World War, as similar incidents occurred during the Second as well. The example of George Frederick "Buzz" Beurling is an appropriate one. If Billy Bishop was the most famous Canadian ace during the First World War, then Buzz Beurling was the most famous one during the Second World War. Beurling, also frequently called "Screwball," had a keen individualist streak in him and, like Bishop, he preferred "lone wolf" sorties to group missions. As a consequence, Beurling had a "penchant for breaking formation" when on sorties with others. Historian Dean Black explains:

> Beurling routinely peeled away from his wingman to pursue single aircraft targets, vehicles on roads or, in some cases that seemed to demonstrate a lack of discipline, he would apparently break formation to go after livestock. What is so remarkable about these forays is that Beurling was prone to perform them regardless of the role he may have been assigned for the formation in question. In other words, even where he had been ordered to lead the formation it was not uncommon for him to abandon his duties, leaving the formation to be led by a neophyte number 2, so as to pursue targets on his own.

These actions were not conducive to squadron cohesion and the development of trust between pilots. Therefore, "it should come to no surprise," Black continued, "that Beurling's behaviour had 'created major tension with his fellow pilots.'" Posted to 403 Squadron RCAF in England in late-1943, Beurling again began to chafe under restrictive formation flying. Appointed head of the unit's "B" flight, Beurling "was apparently not interested in the job," especially because of the administrative responsibilities that it entailed. Desiring to have the freedom of the

"lone wolf" sorties from his years fighting over the skies of Malta, the Canadian ace "time and again...pined for permission to head out over Germany on his own." Denied, Beurling began anew his practice of breaking formation. In so doing, he infuriated his Commanding Officer, Wing Commander Hugh Constant Godefroy, and concerned his fellow 403 Squadron pilots. Most apprehensive were the junior pilots who "were anxious with the prospect of their lead [Beurling] peeling off and disappearing without warning[,] thereby leaving them to fend for themselves." The consequences of these actions were serious for Beurling, although he did have luck on his side. Wing Commander Godefroy arrested Beurling and threatened him with a court-martial. It was only through the intervention of Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, through the Minister of National Defence for Air, Charles G. "Chubby" Power, that Godefroy was "persuaded" instead to agree to a transfer of Beurling to a different Wing. Beurling had escaped serious reprimand because Mackenzie King had taken a keen liking to the airman. After all, Beurling was a famous fighter ace, and a flamboyant one at that. The Prime Minister had realized that although Beurling had shot down 41 German aircraft, perhaps of greater *value* was the ace's potential as a propaganda tool for the Canadian government. It is no surprise, then, that in 1944, Beurling returned to Canada on a goodwill tour, making speeches and addressing large crowds, both live and on CBC Radio. The similarities to Bishop's First World War career, as we shall see, are remarkable. See Black, "Murder by Spitfire?" 13-19; James Holland, *Fortress Malta: An Island Under Siege, 1940-1943* (London: Orion Books, Ltd., 2003), 303.

58 Greenhous, *Making of Billy Bishop*, 71.

59 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 113.

60 Bickers, *The First Great Air War*, 201.

61 Quoted in Winter, *First of the Few*, 134.

62 The Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service had been amalgamated into the Royal Air Force on 1 April 1918.

63 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 208; Bashow, "The Incomparable Billy Bishop," 57.

64 Winter, *First of the Few*, 194.

65 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 95; Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 136; McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 167.

66 Grider diary entries for 30 March and 6 April 1918, in Elliott White Springs (John MacGavock Grider), *War Birds: The Diary of an Unknown Aviator* (London: Temple Press Books, 1966), 56-58.

67 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 167.

68 Ibid.; Grider diary entry for 27 May 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 95.

69 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 167.

70 Winter, *First of the Few*, 182.

71 Ibid., 184.

72 Lord Balfour, quoted in Winter, *First of the Few*, 178.

73 English, *Cream of the Crop*, 47; Winter, *First of the Few*, 178. Such squadron commanders, Winter has suggested, "were quickly sent home to training squadrons, where such rigidity did less immediate damage."

74 Grider diary entry for 8 April 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 59.

75 Ibid.

76 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 168.

77 Grider diary entry for 8 April 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 59.

78 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 169.

79 English, *Cream of the Crop*, 44 and 47.

80 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 171.

81 Grider diary entry for 14 May 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 84.

82 Ibid., 84-85.

83 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 172-173.

84 See Winter, *First of the Few*, 179 and 185-186.

85 Bashow, *Knights of the Air*, 119; Bashow, "Incomparable Billy Bishop," 56. Quotation from latter source. In fact, Arthur Bishop notes of his father that with 85 Squadron in France, "Bishop's one-sided score, in comparison with that of his men, aroused the latter into flying overtime in an effort to get 'a Hun of their own.'" Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 153.

86 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 135-136. For descriptions of Smith-Barry's Gosport training scheme, see English, *Cream of the Crop*, 45; H.A. Jones, *The War in the Air: Being a Story of the Part Played in the Great War by the Royal Air Force*, Volume V (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 429-434; and, Winter, *First of the Few*, 29-37.

87 Bashow, "Incomparable Billy Bishop," 57.

88 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 156.

89 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 95.

90 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 152; Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 95.

91 See, for example, his letter to his wife, Margaret, 2 June 1918, in which he writes, "In the whole of toinghts [sic] flight not a single hun got a chance to fire, so you see I didnt [sic] manage it badly while lead-

ing new pilots." Bishop to Margaret, 2 June 1918, folder 2, file 1918, William Avery Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*. See also McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 183-184.

92 Grider diary entry for 25 May 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 91.

93 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 100.

94 Tommy Williams, quoted in McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 189.

95 Bishop to Margaret, 30 May 1918, folder 2, file 1918, Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*.

96 Bishop to Margaret, 31 May 1918, Ibid.

97 Grider diary entry for 3 June 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 99.

98 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 136. Benbow was another pilot whom Bishop had handpicked for 85 Squadron.

99 Wayne Ralph, *Barker VC: William Barker, Canada's Most Decorated War Hero* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1997), 151; Winter, *First of the Few*, 142.

100 Grider diary entry for 3 June 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 99.

101 Bishop to Margaret, 31 May 1918, folder 2, file 1918, Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*.

102 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 152. See also, McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 189-190.

103 McCaffery, *Canadian Hero*, 188-189.

104 Grider diary entry for 4 June 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 101-102.

105 Ibid.

106 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 153-154.

107 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 103 and 104.

108 Bishop to Margaret, 16 June 1918, folder 2, file 1918, Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*.

109 Mathieson, *Billy Bishop, VC*, 41.

110 Vance, *High Flight*, 275.

111 Baker, *The Man and the Aircraft He Flew*, 104.

112 Ibid.

113 Bishop to Margaret, 16 and 17 June 1918, folder 2, file 1918, Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*.

114 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 160; Christopher Cole, *McCudden V.C.* (London: William Kimber and Co., Ltd., 1967), 129-130 and 187-188.

115 Grider diary entry for 23 June 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 127. Grider further noted the dislike of the Commonwealth members of the squadron for McCudden's lower-class origins: "The rest of the squadron objected because he was once a Tommy and his father was a

sergeant major in the old army. I couldn't see that that was anything against him but these English have great ideas of caste."

116 Winter, *First of the Few*, 141; Ezra Bowen, *Knights of the Air – The Epic of Flight Series* (Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1980), 168. As we see from the following letter to Margaret, Bishop highly approved of Mannock, even before the Irishman was chosen as his successor: "He is a marvel I hear from all accounts. I'm always glad when a man like Mannock does well. He is such a good fellow, & everyone likes him so much." Bishop to Margaret, 25 May 1918, folder 2, file 1918, Bishop fonds, 2001/19, *DHH*.

117 Grider diary entry for 23 June 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 127-128. Mannock was also an excellent leader in the officers' mess, Grider noting that he was "the most accomplished after-dinner speaker I ever heard." Grider diary entry for 20 July 1918, Ibid., 141.

118 Grider diary entry for 23 June 1918, Ibid., 127-128.

119 Frederick Oughton and Commander Vernon Smyth, *Mannock, VC: Ace with One Eye* (Bristol: Cerberus Publishing Ltd., 1956, 2004), 161.

120 Grider diary entries for 10 and 18 July 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 138, 139; Bickers, *The First Great Air War*, 241-242.

121 Grider diary entry for 18 July 1918, in Springs, *War Birds*, 140.

122 Grider diary entry for 20 July 1918, Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 See Winters, *First of the Few*, 177-178.

125 Bishop, *Courage of the Early Morning*, 137.

126 Hugh Halliday, "Bishop, Major William Avery, Distinguished Flying Cross Commendation", *RCAF Personnel – Honours & Awards – 1939-1949*, available online at http://www.airforce.ca/wwi/GONG-1.A-B.html, accessed 8 March 2004.

127 Bashow, "The Incomparable Billy Bishop," 57.

128 By 1918, about 25 percent of all RAF flying personnel and perhaps 40 percent of RAF pilots on the Western Front were Canadian. See Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 579 and 597; Hugh A. Halliday and Brereton Greenhous, *Canada's Air Forces 1914-1999* (Montreal: Art Global, 1999), 21-23.

129 Wise, *Canadian Airmen*, 597. Bishop elaborated on the need for such an organization as follows: "Under the present circumstances, Canadians in the RAF, although doing remarkably well, are certainly not doing as well as if they were in a Canadian Corps for the reasons that (1) They are in great many cases working under senior Officers who do not understand them. (2) They are also working with Officers

who do not...often appreciate their different point of view. (3) They have not the personal touch with their country which branches of the Canadian Corps have and consequently are not inspired by direct connection with the country they are fighting for and the people at home." Bishop to Morrison, 9 April 1918, quoted in Ibid.

130 Ibid., 608-609; Halliday and Greenhous, *Canada's Air Forces*, 23-26.

131 Vance, *High Flight*, Chapter Four. See especially pages 110, 123 and 130 for specific references to Bishop.

132 See, for example, Billy Bishop, "Canadians' Best Bet to Head for Country if Air Bombs Rained," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 29 September 1938, 1 and 7.

133 Douglas, *Creation of a National Air Force*, 144.

134 Richard J. Doyle, "They Called Bishop's Hell's Handmaiden and Said He Was Half the Air Force," *The Globe & Mail*, 12 September 1956, 5. This article appeared shortly after Bishop's death in Palm Springs, Florida.

135 F.J. Hatch, *The Aerodrome of Democracy: Canada and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, 1939-1945* (Ottawa: DND, 1983), 86-93; W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Volume II (Toronto: UTP and DND, 1986), Appendix C; Rachel Lea Heide, "American Concerns, Canadian Resistance, and the Clayton Knight Committee's Clandestine Recruiting of Americans for the Royal Canadian Air Force," Paper prepared for the *Canadian Historical Association's Congress*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 3 June 2004, 2-5.

136 See, for example, "Canada's Air Effort," speech given to the Institute of Chartered Accountants for Ontario by the Honourable Air Marshal W.A. Bishop, 1 March 1940, copy in 181.009 (D6), *DHH*.

137 Matheison, *Billy Bishop, VC*, 49-51; *Bishop, Courage of the Early Morning*, 188-195.

138 This also included Bishop's disdain for paperwork. So busy was Bishop as Director of Recruiting for the BCATP that he "was kept free of most of the routine paper work normally attached to such a job." Doyle, "Hell's Handmaiden," 5.

CHAPTER 4

Squadron Leader N.E. "Molly" Small, DFC, AFC: A Study of Leadership Successes and Failures in the RCAF's Eastern Air Command, 1942

Richard Goette

It is not aeroplanes or ships or tanks that win battles; it is the men in them and the men who command them. The most important factors in any battle are the human factors of leadership, morale, courage and skill, which cannot be reduced to any mathematical formula. It was these that won the Battle of the Atlantic...

Air Marshal Sir John Slessor,
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief Coastal Command.

This chapter offers an historical examination of leadership competencies in the Royal Canadian Air Force's (RCAF) Eastern Air Command during high-risk situations, namely endeavouring to counter the German U-boat (submarine) assault on Canada's east coast in 1942. During that year, the RCAF had a difficult time dealing with the U-boats that entered North American coastal waters to attack Allied shipping. The German opinion that "anti-submarine defences were still weak" in the area[1] proved to be well-founded, for few pilots in the RCAF's Eastern Air Command had the skills or initiative needed to counter the German assault on trade.[2] One exception, however, was Squadron Leader (S/L) N.E. "Molly" Small. This officer has been described by historian W.A.B. Douglas as Eastern

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Squadron Leader N.E. "Molly" Small. A forward-thinker, he endeavoured to make Eastern Air Command more effective against the German U-boat threat.

Air Command's "outstanding pilot and its most conscientious student of maritime airpower."[3] Indeed, Small's skill and initiative not only allowed him to make Eastern Air Command's first U-boat kill on 31 July 1942, it also demonstrated his value as a leader, for it was under his leadership that 113 Bomber Reconnaissance (BR) Squadron achieved the best record of U-boat kills of any Eastern Air Command squadron in 1942. Through his endeavours, Small demonstrated the leadership skills necessary for an effective squadron commander. However, Small's excellent attributes as a leader stood in direct contrast to the marked lack of leadership displayed by his superiors in Eastern Air Command as a whole.

It will therefore be argued that N.E. Small's innovative and independent actions demonstrated both his own emergent leadership skills as an effective squadron commander and the shortcomings of his seniors. To be sure, an examination of this individual's wartime career provides a valuable addition to the study of leadership in the history of Canada's armed forces. Previous historical studies of

Canadian leadership have largely concentrated on studying general officer, or "flag-rank," levels, and have mostly concerned individuals from the army and navy.[4] As such, this chapter will break from the norm since it is an examination of leadership in the air force, and, although it covers leadership at general officer levels, it does so through an examination of a remarkable leader at the squadron commander level, namely N.E. Small.[5]

Background to "Molly" Small's Career

From the beginning of his wartime career, Norville Everitt "Molly" Small demonstrated the intellect and work ethic that would make him a great squadron commander. Small was born in Allandale, Ontario, on 7 December 1908. He joined the RCAF in 1928, originally as a mechanic, but soon after enlisting began training as a pilot. He earned his wings on 2 June 1931. Small served in the RCAF as a sergeant pilot until 1937 when, like several pre-war RCAF pilots, he resigned to fly commercial aircraft. Shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939, Small re-enlisted in the RCAF as a pilot officer and Air Force Headquarters (AFHQ) in Ottawa immediately employed him as an advanced flying instructor on the Douglas Digby aircraft recently acquired from the United States.[6]

In the spring of 1941, due to his commercial airline experience, Small was assigned to the Royal Air Force's (RAF) Ferry Command, where he ferried several aircraft on transatlantic flights from Bermuda to Britain. Among the aircraft Small flew while with Ferry Command was the long-range Consolidated Catalina. Therefore, when the RCAF's newly-formed 116 (BR)[7] Squadron began to take delivery of this type of aircraft in July 1941, AFHQ posted Small to the squadron, which operated out of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.[8]

Small had an immediate impact on his new comrades. Senior leaders described him as a "master pilot" and an "excellent tactician" who was possessed of a "burning desire 'to get on with the job.'" In March 1942, AFHQ recognized Flight Lieutenant Small's service by giving him command of the newly-created 10 (BR)

Squadron Detachment in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and by awarding him an Air Force Cross (AFC).[9] On 28 April 1942, Small was on an operational patrol off Yarmouth in a Canso aircraft (the Canadian amphibian version of the Catalina) No. 9749 when he sighted a U-boat on the surface. Diving from 500 feet, Small attempted to release all four of his 450-pound depth charges around the U-boat. Unfortunately for Small (and fortunately for the Germans), only the first and fourth depth charges dropped. In the end, the aircraft's munitions were not lethal, although Small believed that he "definitely made their back teeth rattle." The attack was made all the more unfortunate when Small's aircraft returned to base, for immediately upon his return, Small received a letter outlining the cure for the depth-charge release problem.[10] Indeed, this would prove not to be the last time that tactical information was late in arriving at the squadron level.

On 19 May 1942, 10 (BR) Detachment in Yarmouth, having received more aircraft, was re-formed as 162 (BR) Squadron, with the recently-promoted Squadron Leader N.E. Small as its commander. One month later, AFHQ assigned Small to take command of 113 (BR) Squadron at Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.[11] Small's short time with 162 (BR) Squadron proved to be very beneficial as he "had insured a sound initial organization [of the squadron] and at the time of his departure the squadron…had accepted and was carrying out efficiently its full responsibilities as an operational unit."[12] His effect on 113 (BR) Squadron would be even greater.
Little over a month after taking command of 113 (BR) Squadron, Small made a successful attack on U-754, the first enemy submarine to be sunk by Eastern Air Command. Flying southeast of Yarmouth on 31 July 1942, Small and his crew surprised the U-boat southeast of Cape Sable. Although German sailors desperately scrambled for the hatch as the vessel's captain ordered a crash dive, the submarine was still visible when Small released the depth charges from his diving Lockheed Hudson. The placing of the depth charges was perfect, as they bracketed the submarine forward of the conning tower and exploded as the U-boat submerged. After a third sweep around the area where the U-boat

had gone down, the front gunner of the aircraft opened fire when U-754's conning tower briefly broke the surface. This was followed by large air bubbles coming to the surface and then "a heavy underwater explosion [which] brought a large quantity of oil swirling up to mark the grave of U-754 – Eastern Air Command's first kill."[13]

Small's destruction of U-754 had not been an accident; it was the result of a careful examination of the operational situation and an innovative and calculated response to it. Indeed, Small had been able to find U-754 thanks largely to the development of "special" intelligence in Canada by the summer of 1942. At the beginning of the war, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) had established, in cooperation with the Department of Transport and the RCAF, an Operational Intelligence Centre (OIC) in Ottawa in order to track the radio transmissions of the enemy. The OIC was able to plot the submarine's estimated position through a system called High Frequency Direction Finding (HF/DF). In order to maximize the effectiveness of his U-boat fleet against Allied shipping, German Admiral Karl Dönitz required his submarine commanders to keep

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A crewman loads a depth charge into the belly of a Hudson aircraft.

in contact with their base by making frequent use of high frequency radio. Such transmissions, however, were easily identified by the Allies' chain of shore HF/DF stations. Therefore, once a U-boat radioed its base in France, stations on both sides of the Atlantic detected and triangulated the signal's bearings. This information went to the OIC in Ottawa, which then was able to plot the approximate position of the U-boat based on its last transmission.[14] The RAF's maritime air organization, Coastal Command, was able to use the HF/DF system to good effect as it allowed Coastal Command Headquarters to utilize the information it received from the Admiralty Submarine Tracking Room in London to conduct aircraft sweeps in areas where U-boat operations were highly probable.[15] The problem in Canada, though, was that it took far too long for the HF/DF information to get from Ottawa to Eastern Air Command Headquarters in Halifax for it to have any operational value.

The first step in correcting this problem came in June 1941 when Group Captain F.V. Heakes, following a visit to Coastal Command, persuaded the RCN officer in charge of the OIC, Commander J.M. "Jock" de Marbois, to set up a direct telephone line to RCAF Station Dartmouth (across the harbour from Eastern Air Command Headquarters in Halifax) to pass on DF bearings as soon as the OIC received them.[16] Although a logical idea, nobody took any action in implementing it, so when German U-boats began to penetrate Canadian waters in 1942, there was still no direct telephone line between OIC and Eastern Air Command. In June 1942, while studying ways to counter the U-boat incursions, Small himself examined this intelligence communication problem. After a long study of Eastern Air Command's operations, he suggested, "it may be advantageous to concentrate on an area known to contain a submarine rather than to make regular wide sweeps of fixed areas."[17]

In an effort to implement such "offensive" tactics, Small set up an *ad hoc* system of communications (it bypassed both the Naval and RCAF Operations Centres in Ottawa and Halifax) with the Director of BR Operations at AFHQ, Wing Commander Clare

Annis, and with de Marbois at OIC. Once de Marbois received a "hot" U-boat fix, he phoned the bearings to Annis, who in turn telephoned the information by hot-line to Small in Yarmouth.[18] The key to the system was that the 113 (BR) Squadron commander had what he termed "emergency standby" crews at full readiness at RCAF Station Yarmouth. These crews were on a 24-hour tour of duty; they slept in the hangar and remained there for the entire duty time, leaving only to take their meals. They were therefore able to act at a moment's notice once a "hot" U-boat fix arrived from Ottawa, much like fighter pilots scrambling during the Battle of Britain. As a result of this system, Small was able to have an aircraft in the air in a scant 12 to 15 minutes from the time the information first came to him.[19] This system proved to be so effective that the OIC began to work directly with Small at Yarmouth.[20] Therefore, it was not surprising that on 31 July it was a crew commanded by Small himself, reacting to a "hot" fix from Ottawa, that led to the sinking of U-754.

Tactical Developments: White Camouflage and 5,000-foot Flying Heights

To plot the approximate location of a U-boat was one thing, but for an aircraft to actually locate the vessel in a large body of water was quite another. Indeed, such a task required good eyesight and a wide breadth of view. The best chance of success was to surprise a U-boat and attack it while it was still surfaced or in the process of submerging. Such manoeuvres culminated in a race between the aircraft and the submarine, as the U-boat crew rushed to dive their vessel while the aircrew attempted to attack the U-boat before it slipped under the surface. The problem for the Allies early in the war was that far too often German lookouts aboard the U-boat were able to spot aircraft before the aircraft spotted them, thereby allowing the U-boat the opportunity to submerge. The result was that most often a U-boat was completely underneath the water before the aircraft could carry out its attack. The problem had become so apparent by 1941 that RAF Coastal Command began to search for solutions on how to make

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A German U-boat under attack.

their aircraft less conspicuous.[21] They soon devised two answers to their problems: white camouflage and higher patrol heights.

As a result of a number of missed opportunities for attacks on U-boats, on 3 June 1941, No. 15 Group RAF Coastal Command sent in a request to Coastal Command Headquarters asking permission to paint the bottom of their aircraft duck egg blue in order to reflect as little light as possible. At that time, the bottoms of RAF aircraft were painted black for protection against searchlights. Although this colour scheme worked well for bombers that operated at night, it worked against No. 15 Group's aircraft that operated over the sea during the day. The sea reflected light onto the black underbelly of the aircraft, making it darker than the North Atlantic sky, which thereby made it easier for the U-boats' lookouts to spot them. In response to this problem, Coastal Command Headquarters immediately tasked Professor P.M.S. Blackett and his scientists at the Command's Operational Research Section (ORS) to explore a variety of colour schemes. After trials in June and July, the scientists concluded that painting the bottom of aircraft white would reduce the reflection of light by some 20 percent, thereby making it more difficult for U-boat lookouts to spot

the aircraft. Therefore, an aircraft with a white bottom had a 20 percent better chance of attacking a U-boat spotted on the surface than an aircraft with the old black colour scheme. As a result, on 8 August, the Air Ministry issued a new order requiring white camouflage for all Coastal Command aircraft engaged in the protection of shipping against German U-boats.[22]

Despite this innovation, a white underbelly was only part of the solution. Another reason why U-boat lookouts were able to spot aircraft quickly was because Coastal Command's standard 500-foot patrol height was simply too low. Therefore, in July 1941, Coastal Command Headquarters released its first standard anti-submarine attack instructions. They called for aircraft to patrol at higher altitudes: close to the cloud ceiling in poor weather and 5,000 feet in clear conditions. As W.A.B. Douglas has explained, the logic of this change in patrol height was twofold: "high-flying aircraft were most likely to make a sighting at long range, and to catch a boat unawares, for the lookout on the conning tower could comfortably scan the lower sky but had to strain his neck to sweep the upper altitudes."[23] Thus, with both the white colour scheme and the higher patrol altitude, it became easier for the aircraft to

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German sailors cling to their life rafts in the water while others attempt to escape their sinking U-boat.

spot the U-boat and, consequently, more difficult for the U-boat to notice the aircraft. The result was an increase in the number of successful attacks by Coastal Command aircraft on U-boats.

The development of such innovative tactical procedures to meet operational realities was typical in Coastal Command during the war. For instance, in order to deal with measures for the improved prosecution of the war against Germany's U-boats, the British in 1941 established a standing committee composed of naval and air force representatives. Under the chairmanship of the Admiralty's Director of Anti-Submarine Warfare, this committee virtually took over the tactical prosecution of the campaign against the U-boats.[24]

An additional innovation to improve Coastal Command's record against the U-boats was undertaken by the senior Royal Navy (RN) officer on the staff at Coastal Command Headquarters, Captain D.V. Peyton-Ward. In late 1941, "P.W.," as those at Headquarters called him, spearheaded a system to collect every scrap of information on Coastal Command aircraft attacks on U-boats so that any mistakes could be remedied and every possible advantage gained. Collecting photographs and intelligence reports was important for the working of this system, but perhaps more important was the RN captain's policy of undertaking an intense debrief of all Coastal Command crews after they had made an attack on a U-boat.[25]

Although it was understood that a crew "will probably be tired and excited and will not be in a position to make a reasoned statement" following an attack, Peyton-Ward's policy directed that the crews "must be interrogated at once" in the following manner:

> The story should be complete to the smallest detail and even facts which may appear irrelevant should be included. The best way to obtain such information is by informal discussion. When the whole incident has been thrashed out a connected account should be written out and read by the crew.[26]

It was through such innovations that RAF Coastal Command became the scourge of the U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic. Its younger cousin, the Bomber Reconnaissance squadrons in the RCAF's Eastern Air Command, however, did not fare as well.

In 1942, Eastern Air Command had nothing close to Coastal Command's ability to organize, develop and promulgate tactics. Indeed, U-boats had only been operating in Canadian waters since the previous October.[27] Eastern Air Command did not yet have an ORS and there was nothing like the British joint air force-navy standing committee to examine tactics until the creation of the Joint RCN-RCAF Anti-Submarine Warfare Committee on 23 March 1943.[28] Therefore, Eastern Air Command had to rely largely upon Coastal Command for tactical innovations against the U-boats. But, initially in 1942, the Canadian maritime air organization did not exploit the tactical expertise of its larger cousin as well as it could have.

S/L Small's Implementation of Coastal Command's Tactical Innovations

In July 1942, S/L Small was the first squadron commander to implement Coastal Command's tactical innovations.[29] They proved to be instrumental in Small's destruction of U-754: he had been able to take the German submarine by surprise because he had had the bottom of his aircraft painted white and he had been flying at a height of 3,000 feet instead of the Eastern Air Command standard of 500 feet.[30] Thus, through Small's astute attention to maritime airpower tactics (technical leadership), and his ambitious efforts to act on fresh intelligence, Small himself (heroic leadership) was able to achieve Eastern Air Command's first U-boat kill.[31]

Small did not, however, use his knowledge of maritime airpower solely to achieve personal success. It must be remembered that Small was a squadron commander. In this role, he demonstrated excellent leadership by ensuring that his entire squadron utilized the tactical innovations that he had developed himself or picked

up from Coastal Command.[32] Indeed, Small's leadership influence on 113 (BR) Squadron produced significant results.

A few hours after Small's destruction of U-754, Pilot Officer G.T. Sayre of 113 (BR) Squadron acting on fresh DF plots phoned RCAF Station Yarmouth and, utilizing the new Coastal Command tactics Small had introduced to the squadron, was able to attack U-132, although he did not sink the German submarine. Other non-lethal attacks by 113 (BR) Squadron aircraft based on DF bearings followed soon thereafter. This time it was Small who again made the attacks, the first on U-458 on 2 August and the second on U-89 three days later.[33] Based on the squadron's recent actions against U-boats, Eastern Air Command assigned a detachment of three of 113 (BR) Squadron's Hudsons to the aerodrome at Chatham, New Brunswick, on 8 September. This unit was to serve as a "special Submarine Hunting Detachment" over the Gulf of St. Lawrence's convoy routes, where U-boats were wreaking havoc on Allied shipping.[34] The detachment's impact was significant for, as one Canadian historian has noted, "the squadron's exploits…considerably brighten[ed] the otherwise gloomy record of the effort to defend the St. Lawrence."[35]

The effect of the new detachment on the area was immediate. On 9 September 1942, Small sent Pilot Officer R.S. Keetley[36] on a patrol in the Gulf of St. Lawrence that was based on DF reports concerning the presence of a U-boat there. Flying at a height of 4,000 feet, he swooped down on what he first thought was a sailboat; in fact, it was U-165, which was cruising on the surface about 20 miles south of Anticosti Island. Since Keetley had at first identified the vessel incorrectly, he was unable to make a successful attack on his initial pass. Unfortunately for Keetley, having alerted the U-boat's crew, on his second pass the RCAF pilot was only able to drop depth charges eight seconds after the submarine had submerged, resulting in no damage.[37] Nonetheless, it is significant that Keetley was flying at such a great height, for although he did not make an attack on his first pass, the surprise that he gained by flying at 4,000 feet did allow him on his second

pass to make an attack on the U-boat in a relatively short amount of time after it had submerged. This situation stood in marked contrast to an attack on a U-boat undertaken by a 10 (BR) Squadron aircraft only six days earlier. During this attack, the aircraft was flying at only 900 feet when it spotted the U-boat. This allowed the lookouts on the German submarine to spot the aircraft much quicker, which meant that the pilot was only able to make an attack on the U-boat a full 20 seconds after it had submerged.[38]

Although Keetley's attack did not damage the U-boat, it did have a significant impact, as it brought further searches for U-165 by RCN vessels and Eastern Air Command aircraft into the area. These searches greatly hampered the movement of the U-boat, causing the submarine's commander to report to his base that he found it "difficult to contact convoys east of Gaspé and south of Anticosti."[39] One week later, again on fresh DF information, Keetley attacked another U-boat. This time it was U-517, which the RCAF pilot spotted north of Cape Magdalen. Although Keetley managed to catch the U-boat on the surface, his attack was not accurate enough, and U-517 was able to escape with only minimal damage.[40] It would not be the last 113 (BR) Squadron would see of U-517.

While escorting the 37th Quebec-to-Sydney convoy (QS 37) on 24 September, Flight Sergeant A.S. White[41] sighted U-517 southeast of Sept-Îles, Québec. The U-boat dove too quickly for White to make an attack, so the 113 (BR) Squadron pilot, adhering to the Coastal Command tactics he had recently learned from S/L Small, first dropped sea markers and then flew off to the convoy in order to warn it. Employing Coastal Command "baiting tactics," White returned to the scene a few minutes later and was able to attack the U-boat, dropping one depth charge (a blown fuse meant that the other three failed to release) some five seconds after the submarine's conning tower had vanished underneath the surface. Although U-517 received no damage, its presence in the area had been established and, as a result, there was a five-aircraft search and escort duty operation carried out that very night.[42] It soon bore results.

Shortly before midnight, another 113 (BR) Squadron Hudson flying from Chatham spotted the U-boat in the clear moonlight. The aircraft, piloted by Flying Officer M.J. Belanger,[43] took U-517 "completely by surprise" and dropped depth charges that resulted in two "violent" explosions close astern. Although well-executed, this attack was not fatal. The next morning, Flight Sergeant M.S. Wallace, flying a Hudson in support of QS 37, twice spotted U-517 and forced the German submarine to dive on both occasions. Later that afternoon, it was Belanger again who spotted U-517 while patrolling just below cloud cover. The RCAF pilot dove to attack while the U-boat crash dived. Again, the U-boat submerged in enough time to avoid damage. Although U-517 had not been sunk, the results for 113 (BR) Squadron were an impressive seven sightings and three well-executed attacks on the German submarine within 24 hours.[44] 113 (BR) Squadron, however, was still not finished with U-517.

Flying his white-underbelly Hudson at 5,000 feet on patrol off Gaspé on 29 September, Flying Officer Belanger once again was able to surprise the German U-boat, this time with the enemy submarine completely on the surface. Belanger attacked with five depth charges, which, although they were "well-placed" according to the U-boat captain, did not destroy the submarine. Belanger, however, did not know that U-517 had survived his attack, and after his debriefing, S/L Small awarded Belanger with a kill. Nevertheless, when the attack report went to the US naval analysts who judged the results of all attacks on U-boats, both air and naval, the Americans calculated that there had been an "overshoot," so they (correctly) assessed the attack as having caused "probable slight damage."[45]

Small's final attack on a German submarine came at dusk on 24 November 1942 when he spotted a U-boat six miles ahead of his aircraft, which was flying southeast of Yarmouth. The German vessel was barely discernible in the failing late-afternoon light and it was able to submerge while Small's aircraft was still 1½ to 2 miles away. Although Small managed to drop depth charges 150

feet in front of the U-boat's swirl, the weapons produced no damage.[46] Soon after this attack, on 11 December, Eastern Air Command ceased 113 (BR) Squadron's operations from Chatham. As a result, throughout December, the squadron continued its anti-submarine sweeps from Yarmouth, south of Nova Scotia, while Small began an "intensive series of lectures" in order to bring his subordinates up-to-date on the latest developments on safety, navigation and tactics.[47]

The sum total of 113 (BR) Squadron's successes in 1942 was impressive. In all, they made 22 sightings, which resulted in 13 attacks. In fact, the squadron made 12 of these attacks between June and November 1942, a total more than all other Eastern Air Command squadrons combined for the whole year.[48] Given these results, it was therefore not surprising in late-December 1942 that the squadron adopted the Wolverine head as its crest and the Latin phrase *Quaerimus et Deviciums* [We Seek and Destroy] as its motto.[49]

When examining the squadron's successes against U-boats, it is clearly evident that only Small's attack on U-754 proved to be fatal; however, this factor did not devalue the effect of the other attacks that did not produce kills. Indeed, the other attacks not only produced some damage to U-boats, but more important, they forced the U-boats to stay beneath the surface, where their slow underwater speed meant that they could not remain in contact with potential targets.[50] This was crucial, for the main goal of Eastern Air Command (and indeed all Canadian and British air and naval forces employed in shipping protection) was "the safe and timely arrival of shipping," not the destruction of U-boats.[51] Furthermore, although 113 (BR) Squadron did not know it at the time, its attacks had had a significant psychological effect on the U-boats' crews. For example, historian Michael Hadly observed that the captain of the heavily-attacked U-517, *Kapitänleutnant* Paul Hartwig:

> …still recalls the stress that RCAF surveillance, 'scare charges,' and attacks caused his watch officers. Planes would unexpectedly swoop down on them, buzz them,

> drop out of a cloud, or skim low over the water out of the sun and drop bombs. Even when the attacks were inaccurate, the bombs made 'one hell of a ruckus.' All his officers had been badly shaken by such attacks and consequently preferred to stand their watch submerged.[52]

This was not the only type of reaction that the squadron had created.

In response to 113 (BR) Squadron's attacks on U-boats based on DF information in late-July and early-August 1942, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal L.S. Breadner, immediately began to dispatch U-boat DF plots from Ottawa to Eastern Air Command Headquarters in Halifax and to No. 1 Group Headquarters in St. John's, Newfoundland. He did this in order to enable airmen to get a more accurate picture of enemy operations in Canadian waters, which would assist in planning air patrols.[53] To better accommodate such a system, the Air Officer Commanding Eastern Air Command, Air Vice-Marshal A.A.L. Cuffe, suggested in early-August to establish a direct telephone line between Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa and the Eastern Air Command Operations Switchboard in Halifax. Despite the logic of this suggestion, such a line was not established for another four months.[54] Nonetheless, Cuffe understood who was behind the successful attacks, so he posted Small to Eastern Air Command Headquarters as a controller in order to ensure that the staff in the Operations Room clearly understood how to promulgate DF intelligence.[55] Indeed, there had been a few occasions where controllers had failed to pass on intelligence concerning U-boat activity. For example, on 30 July 1942, a controller failed to report a U-boat DF position to a patrolling aircraft because he "apparently decided that the situation did not warrant the diversion of aircraft to the area."[56]

As has been mentioned, part of the problem had to do with the fact that information simply did not get to Eastern Air Command Headquarters from Ottawa quickly enough. Another was that the Operations Room at Eastern Air Command did not have enough

staff, which meant that it was simply swamped with too much information. However, Eastern Air Command controllers lacked both training and experience. For instance, the kind of intelligence training Eastern Air Command officers received was mainly in areas other than maritime work.[57] Furthermore, officers simply did not get enough time to learn their jobs properly. Air Vice-Marshal Cuffe explained the situation best:

> It is to be appreciated that the young officers employed as Controllers in this Command have not had the necessary training and experience to make them fully competent for this position. These officers were selected from within the Command and the selection was made in such a way as to obtain officers with B.R. experience, but at the same time, it was necessary to make the selections which would not seriously undermine the strength of the units from which withdrawals were made. It was, therefore, not possible to select the more fully qualified officers to fill these vacancies.[58]

The lack of experienced personnel was indeed a serious problem in Eastern Air Command in 1942, as there were neither men to spare for both Control Room duties *and* manning squadrons. The result was "a system that benefited neither the squadrons themselves nor the control room staffs, for enough officers were posted away from squadrons to control room staffs to ensure both a decline in efficiency in the squadrons and an inadequate number of trained and experienced control room staff officers."[59] Assistance to help remedy the controller problems in Eastern Air Command came from the RCN. In October, naval officers started holding a three-week course on OIC naval intelligence for RCAF controllers.[60] In addition, AFHQ also attempted to arrange an exchange of Control Room staff with Coastal Command in 1942, but this endeavour was unsuccessful.[61] Thus, although Small did help ease the controller dilemma in Eastern Air Command, solving the problem was beyond his abilities.

The recognition that Small received for his successes with 113 (BR) Squadron was substantial. In terms of honours and awards, Small could take satisfaction not only in the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) that he had received,[62] but also in the commendations that other personnel from his squadron had been awarded. For example, for his attacks on U-517 during the summer, Flying Officer M.J. Belanger also received a DFC.[63] Commendations also went to Flying Officers Greer and Francis and Flight Sergeant Bow, who were all Mentioned-in-Despatches, another significant honour.[64]

The squadron's attacks also received recognition from the government and press. In a public-relations ploy in mid-December 1942 to allay the public's feeling of vulnerability caused by the U-boats, the Minister of National Defence for Air, Charles Gavan "Chubby" Power, released news regarding the September attacks on U-517. The newspapers seized the information immediately and, despite the fact that there was no evidence that the U-boat had been sunk, they printed their own versions of the story with headlines such as "RCAF Sends Nazi Submarine to the Bottom of St. Lawrence," "U-Boats Get into St. Lawrence but Not All Get Out," and "RCAF 'Gets' Another U-Boat." In spite of Pilot Officer Keetley's modest admission of luck, that "We just stumbled upon them during our regular antisubmarine sweeps," the *Halifax Herald* was undaunted, extolling that Keetley's success was the result of "eternal vigilance."[65]

Nonetheless, despite the efforts of 113 (BR) Squadron, the head of the German U-boat arm, Admiral Karl Dönitz, concluded when summarizing the efforts of his U-boats in Canadian waters in autumn 1942 that the Canadian defences proved to be comparatively weak. As a consequence, the German admiral planned to send further U-boats to the area to make the most of this condition.[66] Although this statement largely reflected the failed efforts of the RCN,[67] it was still a damning account of Eastern Air Command's efforts against German U-boats in 1942.

(The Lack of) Tactical Developments in Eastern Air Command

Part of Eastern Air Command's failures had to do with the organization's late implementation of Coastal Command tactics. Coastal Command Headquarters was in fact quick to share their tactical innovations with AFHQ in Ottawa. Although the Air Member for the Air Staff at AFHQ, Air Vice-Marshal N.R. Anderson, informed Coastal Command on 24 April 1942 that the Coastal Command tactical innovations described above were "being adopted immediately" for BR aircraft in order to give them an edge over the U-boats,[68] by July 1942, however, 113 (BR) Squadron was the only squadron in Eastern Air Command implementing the new measures, and this was only by the extraordinarily ambitious actions of S/L Small. In fact, the implementation of the Coastal Command tactics in the rest of Eastern Air Command occurred in autumn 1942.[69]

Why, then, did it take so long for the remaining squadrons in Eastern Air Command to implement them? As W.A.B. Douglas has explained, the main reason for this problem was the "general lack of leadership" among senior officers in Eastern Air Command.[70] Indeed, upon examination, it appears that the senior officers of Eastern Air Command, unlike S/L Small, failed to stress the importance of Coastal Command's tactical innovations and therefore also failed to ensure that squadrons implemented them.

In April 1941, AFHQ posted the former Air Officer Commanding Eastern Air Command, then-Air Commodore N.R. Anderson, for a few months to Coastal Command Headquarters in Great Britain. While there, Anderson was able to learn a great deal about the RAF's campaign against German U-boats. Not surprisingly, he requested that Coastal Command pass on copies of its tactical memoranda to Canada so that Eastern Air Command could utilize the proven practices of their British counterparts.[71] The RAF organization concurred, although Coastal Command tactical information still did not find its way to the Eastern Air Command

squadrons. Part of the delay had to do with the fact that a good deal of the material that Coastal Command sent to Canada went to AFHQ in Ottawa, not to Eastern Air Command Headquarters in Halifax. Consequently, in March 1942, the Air Officer Commanding Eastern Air Command, Air Vice-Marshal A.A.L. Cuffe, requested that AFHQ pass on to his headquarters any information received from Coastal Command.[72]

This factor, however, was not the main reason why the tactical information was not getting to the Eastern Air Command squadrons. Upon investigation of the problem in April 1942, the Director of Armaments at AFHQ, Group Captain T.J. Desmond, discovered that the Directorate of Intelligence distributed both Coastal Command tactical memoranda and instructions to Command headquarters, which in turn made copies and sent them on to squadrons. He admitted that this was satisfactory "in so far as *memoranda* are concerned," but it was a different case altogether in terms of the tactical *instructions*:

> Tactical instructions, however, are as the title implies, definite orders. As they are originally prepared by the RAF, they carry no executive authority in Canada. The result is that unit commanders read and digest them but do not necessarily put them into effect and in actual fact Eastern and Western Air Command Headquarters appear to have neither given executive authority to RAF instructions, nor to have issued any tactical instructions of their own. If this is in fact the case, the tactical employment of aircraft rests with individual unit commanders, and I think that you will agree that this is most unsatisfactory.[73]

In order to solve this concern, Desmond proposed that AFHQ emphasize to the Air Officers Commanding Eastern and Western Air Commands that "the tactical employment of aircraft is entirely their responsibility" and that how aircraft in their commands are to be employed must be laid out in "appropriate standing instructions." Furthermore, these standing tactical instructions

should utilize fully "the experience gained in the RAF" and should be drafted on the basis of Coastal Command's tactical instructions, "modified to suit local arrangements."[74]

Despite the logic of Desmond's suggestions, however, it does not appear that they were carried out. Although the onus to implement the tactical information was on the squadron commanders, as Desmond noted above, the actual *responsibility* for the type of tactics Eastern Air Command utilized ultimately laid with Eastern Air Command Headquarters. Why, then, did the senior leadership in this RCAF organization fail?

Part of the reason had to do with the fact that most senior Eastern Air Command officers knew very little about maritime air operations. These officers had matured in peacetime, when the main focus was civil flying operations, thereby denying them "the opportunity to keep up to date on the great changes in aircraft and equipment accelerated by the war."[75] In addition, maritime air doctrine in general saw very minimal development in the inter-war era.[76] Instead, any doctrine RCAF officers learned consisted of the strategic bombing theories taught by Air Marshal Sir Hugh Trenchard and his successors at the RAF Staff College in Andover, England. The result was that when the war broke out, these officers had minimal knowledge of maritime airpower.[77]

This factor was crucial, as it meant that RCAF senior officers "had narrow focuses that were not conducive to the often-quick developments in aerial trade defence."[78] A telling demonstration of such a parochial view and the dearth of maritime air knowledge occurred in January 1943, when Coastal Command sent S/L T.M. Bulloch, RAF, and Flying Officer M.S. Layton, RCAF, to tour Eastern Air Command and give advice to the Canadians. Upon hearing about the assignment, however, the Chief of the Air Staff demurred. He felt that Coastal Command, by sending lower-ranking officers instead of senior officers, was in fact snubbing the RCAF. What Breadner did not realize was that Bulloch and Layton were the brightest and most experienced officers conducting shipping

defence operations in Coastal Command at the time.[79] Indeed, Breadner's failure to recognize the importance of the two officers' operational experience was only emphasized by the warm reception Bulloch and Layton received at the squadron level. Eastern Air Command personnel appreciated their insights because the two Coastal Command officers saw the Canadian aviators' problems "through the eyes of aircrew rather than staff." Furthermore, as naval historian W.A.B. Douglas observed, "'Gen,' the air force slang for intelligence, from brothers in arms is always more credible than staff memoranda, and it is likely that Bulloch and Layton also instilled some badly needed confidence."[80]

This divide between senior and junior personnel in Eastern Air Command was also evident in Air Marshal Clare Annis' recollections of his service with the RCAF organization during the war. He commented that Air Vice-Marshal Cuffe was not a very good Air Officer Commanding, recalling one incident when he "took in an important report about E[astern] A[ir] C[ommand] aircraft one time and he [Cuffe] said: 'Don't bother me with figures!' Hardly a remark to inspire confidence in a subordinate."[81]

The inferior resource position of Eastern Air Command did not help senior officers in the RCAF organization either. One naval historian argued that "the senior officers of Eastern Air Command were overly parochial in outlook and too often failed to get their priorities right."[82] Indeed, instead of focusing on the implementation of tactical information in their command, "senior officers were preoccupied with mundane day-to-day needs and the requirement simply to find enough men and equipment to fly the necessary number of sorties."[83] The result of all of these factors was that the onus on implementing Coastal Command tactics remained on the squadron commander. Unfortunately for Eastern Air Command, most squadron commanders did not appreciate the importance of the tactical instructions, and therefore did not ensure that their subordinates utilized them on operations. Small was the only exception, and, as Marc Milner has noted, "luckily for the Germans, Small was one of a kind."[84]

Squadron Leader N.E. "Molly" Small was killed on 8 January 1943 when his Canso aircraft crashed shortly after taking off from Gander, Newfoundland, as a result of equipment failure.[85] So ended the life of a remarkable aviator. Grief over Small's death was expressed throughout Eastern Air Command and was demonstrated best in the Operational Records Book of Small's former squadron, No. 162 (BR), which had also recently suffered a crash of one of its aircraft: "It is impossible to express our feelings with regard to these two calamities – the loss of so many of our good comrades has stunned the whole Station."[86]

Yet, in his death, Small demonstrated his technical and heroic leadership qualities. Small's plane crashed because he had been experimenting on how to get more range out of 5 (BR) and 162 (BR) Squadrons' Canso aircraft so that they could provide protection for convoys as far out into the Atlantic Ocean as possible. This endeavour was crucial for in the middle of the Atlantic there was an "Air Gap" where U-boats operated freely from fear of Allied aircraft, which lacked sufficient range to patrol the area effectively.[87] Strong westerly winds restricted the range of Eastern Air Command's Canso aircraft to 500 miles. In order to increase the range of the aircraft, Eastern Air Command assigned its best officer, S/L Small, to Gander.[88]

Small immediately set out to strip as much weight as possible from the aircraft to allow more gasoline to be carried. In all, Small was able to eliminate 1,269 pounds of equipment, which included "changing from 450-lb depth charges to 240-lb Torpex depth charges, removal of bow and tunnel guns and 1,000 rounds of ammunition from each of the blister guns." By removing this equipment, Small hoped that the Cansos could reach out 600 to 700 miles into the Atlantic.[89] Unfortunately, he never did find out whether or not his initiatives worked.

Nevertheless, thanks to Small's weight-saving measures (technical leadership), which he tested himself and died while so doing (heroic leadership), No. 5 (BR) Squadron was able to extend the

range of its Canso aircraft to 700 miles. The squadron capitalized on Small's innovations immediately, for as W.A.B. Douglas has pointed out, "it was largely due to the efforts of Small that Gander-based Cansos were able to make a series of promising attacks [on U-boats] at maximum range during the early weeks of February [1943]."[90]

By this time, other improvements in Eastern Air Command's trade protection efforts had also come to the fore. By November 1942, a direct telephone line between Eastern Air Command Headquarters in Halifax and Naval Service Headquarters in Ottawa had been established. This meant that Eastern Air Command Headquarters received quicker and more accurate DF intelligence on U-boats, upon which they now organized the majority of their anti-submarine sweeps.[91] The tactical performance of the squadrons also benefited from new Eastern Air Command initiatives. For example, in November 1942, Eastern Air Command established its own ORS, modeled on the one at Coastal Command in England, to undertake analytical studies of anti-submarine operations. Additionally, in the late-autumn of 1942, Eastern Air Command, in order to sharpen the tactical skills of its pilots and crews, ordered that all crews in shipping protection squadrons had to drop at least one depth charge per month.[92] In sum, Eastern Air Command was learning from its mistakes, but it had taken a long time and the performance of one of its experts, S/L Small, to spur these changes.

Conclusion

Clearly, N.E. Small's innovative and independent actions demonstrated both his own leadership skills as an effective squadron commander and the shortcomings of the senior leadership of Eastern Air Command. By going out of his way to find more effective techniques to act upon intelligence, by implementing proven Coastal Command tactics, and by commanding aircraft himself on anti-submarine missions, Small most definitely proved that he had both the technical and heroic leadership qualities

necessary to be an excellent squadron commander. His role in Eastern Air Command's mission to protect shipping was substantial, but unfortunately, Small was an anomaly in the RCAF. By demonstrating his leadership qualities, Small revealed the leadership shortcomings of both his fellow squadron commanders and his superiors at Eastern Air Command. Fortunately, Small's actions inspired others, and as a result, by 1943, the rest of the RCAF was following his lead.

Appendix One:
Squadron Leader N.E. Small's Commendations

Small, F/L Norville Everett (C1379) – **Air Force Cross** – No. 116 Squadron (Canada) – Award effective 11 June 1942 as per *London Gazette* dated 11 June 1942 and AFRO 1000-1001/42 dated 3 July 1942. Born at Allandale, Ontario, 7 December 1908. Enlisted at Camp Borden, 23 May 1928. Awarded wings at Vancouver, 2 June 1931. Spent much of the 1930s in commercial aviation. Credited with several attacks on U-boats, summer of 1942 including Eastern Air Command's first sinking of a submarine. AFC presented 3 December 1942. Killed in flying accident, 6 January 1943 (Canso 9737).

> *Flight Lieutenant Small is an outstanding pilot who has been utilized as an advanced instructor and ferry pilot most of the time since the start of the war. He is extremely keen in all phases of his work. He was picked to captain the Catalina which did a reconnaissance flight around the Labrador Coast, Hudson Strait and Hudson's Bay this fall. During the spring and summer of 1941 he made five ferry flights from Bermuda to the United Kingdom, one of them in record time, and has completed 125 hours of flying on this type of work. He has flown a total of 1,224 hours. This officer's devotion to duty deserves recognition, and I strongly recommend him for the above award.*

Small, F/L Norville Everett (C1379) – **Distinguished Flying Cross** – No. 113 Squadron (Canada) – Award effective 1 January 1943 as per *London Gazette* of that date and AFRO 55/43 dated 15 January 1943.

> *This officer has displayed outstanding airmanship, courage and devotion to duty on operational flying in the face of the enemy over the sea off the coast of Nova Scotia. During the last few months he has carried out five attacks*

on enemy submarines carrying armament considerably superior to that of the aircraft. Three of these attacks were successful; two of the successful attacks were made within a recent period of six days on fully surfaced submarines with their decks manned.

In the course of 335 hours operational flying during the last four months, this officer has on several occasions distinguished himself by his initiative and by the completion of difficult tasks under adverse weather conditions; in particular he has been of prime assistance in effecting more than one sea rescue of survivors of sunken or damaged vessels.

Source: Hugh Halliday, "Small, F/L Norville Everett (C1379), Air Force Cross Commendation," and, "Distinguished Flying Cross Commendation," *RCAF Personnel – Honours & Awards – 1939-1949*, available online at http://www.airforce.ca/wwii/ALPHA-SM.1.html, accessed 10 November 2002.

Appendix Two:

Successes against U-boats by 113 (BR) Squadron while under the command of S/L N.E. "Molly" Small

July 1942:

Date	Pilot	U-boat	Result
31st July	Small	U-754	sunk
31st July	Sayre	U-132	no damage

August 1942:

Date	Pilot	U-boat	Result
2nd August	Small	U-458	no damage
5th August	Small	U-89	slight damage

September 1942:

Date	Pilot	U-boat	Result
9th September	Keetley	U-165	no damage
16th September	Keetley	U-517	minimal damage
24th September	White	U-517	no damage
24th September	Belanger	U-517	slight damage
25th September	Wallace	U-517	U-boat forced to dive twice
25th September	Belanger	U-517	no damage
29th September	Belanger	U-517	slight damage

November 1942:

Date	Pilot	U-boat	Result
24th November	Small	U-183?	no damage

Source: W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Volume II (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and the Department of National Defence, 1986); David Kealy, "The Anti-Submarine War off the East Coast, 1942," RCAF History Vol. II Narrative, 12 July 1982, box 4, file 12, 89/97,

Directorate of History and Heritage [DHH]; 181.003 (D25), *DHH*; and, 113 (BR) Squadron Operational Records Book, July to August 1942, microfilm reel C-12,243, Vol. 22,616, RG 24, *Library and Archives of Canada*.

Endnotes

The author would like to thank Dr. Allan English, Howard Coombs, Rich Mayne and the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute for their assistance with this project.

1 Admiral Karl Dönitz, R.H. Stevens, trans., *Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days* (Annapolis: First Da Capo Press, 1997), 195.

2 Dönitz noted that although aircraft in the Western Atlantic were "there in sufficient strength," pilots were "inexperienced, and in comparison to the English air escort can only be described as bad." Dönitz's emphasis. Quoted in David Kealy, "The Anti-Submarine War off the East Coast, 1942," RCAF History Vol. II Narrative, 12 July 1982, box 4, file 12, 18, 89/97, *Directorate of History and Heritage* [*DHH*].

3 W.A.B. Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Volume II (Toronto: University of Toronto Press [UTP] and the Department of National Defence, 1986), 504.

4 Examples of these studies include: Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn and Stephen Harris, eds., *Warrior Chiefs: Perspectives on Senior Canadian Military Leaders* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2001); Stephen J. Harris, *Canadian Brass: The Making of a Professional Army, 1860-1939* (Toronto: UTP, 1988); and, Michael Whitby, Richard Gimblett and Peter Haydon, *The Admirals* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2006).

5 The Second World War rank of Squadron Leader is equivalent to today's junior-to-medium ranks of Major (air force, army) and Lieutenant-Commander (navy). Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada from Champlain to Kosovo*, 4th ed. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1999), Appendix II, 313.

6 Hugh Halliday, "Small, F/L Norville Everett (C1379), Air Force Cross [AFC] Commendation," *RCAF Personnel – Honours & Awards – 1939-1949*, available online at http://www.airforce.ca/ wwii/ALPHA-SM.1.html, accessed 10 November 2002; Arthur Bishop, *Courage in the Air: Canada's Military Heritage*, Vol. 1 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1992), 264; Air Marshal Clare L. Annis, "I'll Never Forget," in *I'll Never Forget...Canadian Aviation in the Second World War* (Ottawa: Canadian Aviation Historical Society, 1979), 63; and, Douglas, *Creation*, 504.

7 In Canada, aerial squadrons involved in the defence of trade from German U-boats were called "Bomber Reconnaissance" (BR). In modern terminology, these squadrons are called "Maritime Patrol."

8 Halliday, N.E. Small online AFC Commendation; Bishop, *Courage in the Air*, 264; Douglas, *Creation*, 504; Samuel Kostenuk and John Griffin, *RCAF Squadron Histories and Aircraft, 1924-1968* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert Ltd., 1977), 49. Small's AFC Commendation notes that one of his transatlantic flights was "in record time."

9 Halliday, N.E. Small online AFC Commendation; Douglas, *Creation*, 504; Carl Vincent, "Prelude to Glory – The story of 162 (BR) Squadron RCAF, 1942-May 1944," *High Flight – Canada's Wings*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (November/December 1981), 230; No. 113 (BR) Operational Records Book [ORB], 3 December 1942, microfilm reel C-12,243, Vol. 22,616, Record Group [RG] 24, *Library and Archives of Canada* [*LAC*]. Small received notice of his AFC commendation on 11 June 1942 and received the medal itself during a ceremony at Government House, Ottawa, on 3 December. See Appendix One to this chapter for the full commendation. Quotation from Douglas.

10 Vincent, "Prelude to Glory," 230-231; Bishop, *Courage in the Air*, 264. Quotation from Vincent. The Admiralty in Britain assessed the attack as the U-boat being "probably slightly damaged." See "History of Eastern Air Command," *DHH* narrative (1945), file 74/2, 351, *DHH*.

11 Vincent, "Prelude to Glory," 231; Douglas, *Creation*, 504; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 26 June 1942.

12 "History of Eastern Air Command," 391.

13 Kostenuk and Griffin, *Squadron Histories*, 46; Bishop, *Courage in the Air*, 265; Douglas, *Creation*, 520; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 31 July 1942. Quotation from Douglas. It was not, however, the first destruction of a U-boat by an aircraft in the Northwest Atlantic. The claim to this feat went to the United States Navy (USN) when a VP-82 Squadron Hudson from its base in Argentia, Newfoundland, sank U-656 south of Cape Race on 1 March 1942. This was followed two weeks later by another USN success when a Hudson from the same squadron sank U-503 south-east of Newfoundland. See Kealy, "A/S War East Coast 1942," 18; "U-656," available online at http://www.uboat.net/ boats/u656.htm; and, "U-503," available online at http://www.uboat.net/ boats/ u503.htm, both accessed 25 February 2003.

14 "Notes on the History of Operational Intelligence Centre in Canada, 1939," 2 and "1941," 4-5, Vol. 3, 81/520/1440-18, *DHH*; Horatio Nelson Lay, *Memoirs of a Mariner* (Stittsville: Canada's Wings, 1982), 141;

Douglas, *Creation*, 520; Alfred Price, *Aircraft Versus Submarine: The evolution of the anti-submarine aircraft, 1912 to 1972* (London: William Kimber and Co., Ltd., 1973), 109.

15 Captain D.V. Peyton-Ward, *The RAF in the Maritime War, Volume II: The Atlantic and Home Waters: September 1939-June 1940* (RAF Air Historical Branch Narrative), n.d., 46, 79/599, *DHH*; Captain D.V. Peyton-Ward, *The RAF in the Maritime War, Volume III: The Atlantic and Home Waters – the Preparative Phase, July 1941 to February 1943* (RAF Air Historical Branch Narrative), n.d., 93, 79/599, *DHH*. See also Patrick Beesly, "Operational Intelligence and the Battle of the Atlantic: The Role of the Royal Navy's Submarine Tracking Room," in James A. Boutilier, ed., *The RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia [UBC] Press, 1982), 175-186, and Joubert to Anderson, 18 November 1941, 181.009 (6734), *DHH*.

16 Douglas, *Creation*, 479.

17 "History of Eastern Air Command", 434.

18 Interview with Clare L. Annis, 10 September 1979 (by J.D.F. Kealy and W.A.B. Douglas). The first aircraft search that Small sent in response to the "hot" U-boat fixes was on 23 July 1942. See 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 23 July 1942.

19 Annis Interview; Notes on an Interview with Clare L. Annis, 10 September 1979 (by J.D.F. Kealy and W.A.B. Douglas), 2-3; N.E. Small to Air Officer Commanding Eastern Air Command [AOC EAC], 24 December 1942, 181.002 (D68A), *DHH*; Bishop, *Courage in the Air*, 264.

20 Notes on an Interview with Clare L. Annis, 2-3.

21 Price, *Aircraft Versus Submarine*, 69; Peyton-Ward, II, 305, 79/599, *DHH*. From the moment of sounding the diving alarm, a U-boat could be under the surface in 25 seconds.

22 This order was subsequently issued to the Groups by Coastal Command Headquarters on 10 August 1941. Peyton-Ward, II, Appendix XII, 79/599, *DHH*; John Buckley, *The RAF and Trade Defence, 1919-1945: Constant Endeavour* (Keele, U.K.: Ryburn Publishing, Keele University Press, 1995), 176-177; C.H. Waddington, *O.R. in World War 2: Operational Research against the U-boat* (London: Elek Science, 1973), 164-165; P.M.S Blackett, *Studies of War, Nuclear and Conventional* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962), 216-217; and, Price, *Aircraft Versus Submarine*, 70. Alfred Price argues that the adaptation of the white colour scheme was "a tacit recognition of a colour scheme gulls and other sea birds had adopted some millions of years earlier."

23 Douglas, *Creation*, 474. 5,000 feet, however, was the maximum height to fly, as it would not give the aircraft enough time to dive and attack a U-

boat with much success. The 5,000 feet patrol height was embodied in Coastal Command Tactical Instruction No. 31. Commander-in-Chief Coastal Command [CinCCC] to AOC EAC, 20 October 1942, 181.002 (D90), *DHH*, and, "Coastal Command Tactical Instruction No. 31," 181.09 (D1147), *DHH*.

24 Peyton-Ward, II, 41, and II, 308-310, 79/599, *DHH*.

25 Peyton-Ward, II, 43, Ibid.; Sir John Slessor, *The Central Blue: Recollections and Reflections* (London: Cassel and Co., Ltd., 1956), 486.

26 "Coastal Command Tactical Instruction No. 31," 181.09 (D1147), *DHH*.

27 Douglas, *Creation*, 481.

28 Minutes of 1st Meeting of the Canadian Joint Anti-Submarine Committee, 23 March 1943, 181.002 (D145), *DHH*.

29 "History of Eastern Air Command," 434 and 442; Douglas, *Creation*, 502 and 520.

30 Douglas, *Creation*, 520; CinCCC to AOC EAC, 20 October 1942, 181.002 (D90), *DHH*.

31 For a discussion of technical leadership and heroic leadership, see the author's chapter in this volume on William "Billy" Bishop.

32 "History of Eastern Air Command," 434 and 442.

33 Douglas, *Creation*, 520; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 31 July, and, 2 and 5 August 1942.

34 Kostenuk and Griffin, *Squadron Histories*, 46; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 8 September 1942; Roger Sarty, "Eastern Air Command Anti-Submarine Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 1942," RCAF History Vol. II Narrative, July 1982, box 4, file 15, 32-33, 89/97, *DHH*. The detachment was later reinforced with a further three Hudsons from Yarmouth on 18 September. See 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 18 September 1942.

35 Douglas, *Creation*, 504; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 9 and 16 September 1942.

36 Robert Stanley Keetley was born on 16 April 1920 in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. He had only made his first operational flight on 8 July 1942. In November 1944, "for long and outstanding service as a BR pilot," Keetley was Mentioned-in-Dispatches. He served his entire wartime career in Eastern Air Command, retiring on 9 February 1946. Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 33.

37 Douglas, *Creation*, 502.

38 Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 68.

39 Douglas, *Creation*, 502; U-165 was eventually sunk while returning from her patrol in the Western Atlantic on 27 September 1942. Although the exact location of the submarine's sinking is not certain, it is known that

it was in the Bay of Biscay west of Lorient and that it was most likely caused by striking air-laid mines. There were no survivors. See "U-165," available on at http://www.uboat.net/boats/u165.htm, accessed 25 February 2003.

40 Douglas, *Creation*, 502-503; Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 38; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 16 September 1942.

41 Albert Stanford White bas born on 6 September 1920 in Windsor, Ontario. Although this was the only attack he made on a U-boat during the war, he "was awarded the DFC on 30 June 1944 for the 'fortitude' and 'high degree of skill' he displayed as a BR pilot." Unfortunately, he was killed on 6 December 1944 while employed as an instructor when his Lockheed Ventura "crashed during a routine training flight over the Bay of Fundy." See Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 45.

42 Douglas, *Creation*, 505; "Coastal Command Tactical Instruction No. 31," 181.09 (D1147), *DHH*; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 24 September 1942; Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 68-69.

43 Maurice John Belanger was born in Ottawa on 25 June 1919. AFHQ posted him to 113 (BR) Squadron in late-June 1942, where he remained until May 1943, when he began a six month tour at RCAF Station Sydney before being posted to serve as a bomber pilot with 425 Squadron in England. He finished his service with the RCAF on 3 April 1945. See Sarty, "A/S Operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence," 46.

44 These statistics also speak volumes of the determination of U-517's captain in his efforts to sink shipping. Douglas, *Creation*, 505; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 25 September 1942.

45 Douglas, *Creation*, 505; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 29 September 1942.

46 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 24 November 1942; Kealy, "A/S War East Coast 1942," 72; Eastern Air Command Monthly Anti-Submarine Report for November, 1942, 181.003 (D25), *DHH*.

47 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 6-16 December 1942.

48 Kostenuk and Griffin, *Squadron Histories*, 46. Also see, Robert L. Baglow, "An Examination of A/S Operations of the East Coast of Canada, Feb-Oct, 1942," *DHH* Report, September 1979, 79/649, *DHH*.

49 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 29 December 1942.

50 Michael L. Hadley, "Inshore ASW in the Second World War: The U-Boat Experience," in W.A.B. Douglas, ed., *The RCN in Transition, 1910-1985* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 132 and 134; Report of Trip Made by Squadron Leader T.M. Bulloch and Flying Officer M.S. Layton to the Operational Stations and General Reconnaissance Schools of Eastern Air Command, 1 March 1943, Part 3, File S.15-1-350, Vol. 5177, RG 24, *LAC*.

Despite the new Coastal Command tactics, there were still several occasions where U-boats sighted an aircraft before being sighted themselves. Nevertheless, this forced U-boats to crash dive, thereby frustrating the U-boat crew by forcing it to disengage from any attack on shipping.

51 "Submarine Warfare, World War II," Report prepared by Wing Commander C.L. Annis, RCAF, 29 January 1943, 7, 181.003 (D309), *DHH*.

52 Hadley, "U-Boat Experience," 132-133. Hadley's information comes from a July 1982 interview with then-Admiral Hartwig. U-517 was finally sunk by Albacore aircraft from the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS *Victorious* southwest of Ireland on 21 November 1942. U-517 had been four days out of Lorient, France, on only its second war patrol. "U-517," available online at http://www.uboat.net/ boats/u517.htm, accessed 10 November 2002.

53 Chief of the Air Staff [CAS] to AOC EAC, 2 August 1942, File S.15-24-12, Vol. 5199, RG 24, *LAC*; Douglas, *Creation*, 520-521. Eastern Air Command also laid out procedures whereby once Eastern Air Command Headquarters received a DF report, it would order an aircraft that was currently on a mission, "provided it is not of absolute necessity…to intercept – if not, then an a/c [aircraft] is ordered to intercept from base, provided there are a/c available." See AOC EAC to Power (AFHQ), 5 August 1942, 181.009 (D1147), *DHH*.

54 Kealy, "A/S War East Coast 1942," 40-41.

55 Douglas, *Creation*, 521; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 14 August 1942.

56 AOC EAC to Power (AFHQ), 5 August 1942, 181.009 (D1147), *DHH*. See also Douglas, *Creation*, 519.

57 Report by Group Captain P.F. Canning, RAF Coastal Command on visit to United States and Canada, 19 October 1942, Air Ministry File [Air] 15/217, *Public Records Office* [*PRO*].

58 AOC EAC to Power (AFHQ), 5 August 1942, 181.009 (D1147), *DHH*.

59 Richard Evan Goette, "The Struggle for a Joint Command and Control System in the Northwest Atlantic Theatre of Operations: A Study of the RCAF and RCN Trade Defence Efforts During the Battle of the Atlantic," Unpublished M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 2002, 28.

60 Report by S/L C.G. Ruttan on the Course of Instruction for Naval "Y" Intelligence, 19 October 1942, S.28-5-10, Vol. 5272, RG 24, *LAC*.

61 Goette, "Joint Command and Control," 28.

62 Halliday, "Small, F/L Norville Everett (C1379), DFC Commendation," *RCAF Personnel – Honours & Awards – 1939-1949*, available online at http://www.airforce.ca/wwii/ALPHA-SM.1.html, accessed 10 November 2002. The DFC Commendation also recognized Small's efforts to rescue the survivors of sunken or damaged vessels. See Appendix One to this chapter for the full DFC commendation.

63 Halliday, "Belanger, F/L Maurice John (J10432), DFC Commendation," *RCAF Personnel – Honours & Awards – 1939-1949*, available online at http://www.airforce.ca/wwii/ALPHA-BE.1.html, accessed 10 November 2002; Douglas, *Creation*, 505. Halliday and Douglas both note that Belanger received a Bar to his DFC for his achievements in RAF Bomber Command during 1944.

64 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 2 January 1943.

65 Douglas, *Creation*, 508; Michael Hadley, *U-Boats Against Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 130. For more on the political and public reaction to the heavy toll U-boats took on shipping in the St. Lawrence, see Hadley, *U-boats Against Canada*, chapters 3 and 4.

66 Only the Allied landings in North Africa (Operation "Torch"), and the necessity of Dönitz to attack its supply chain, prevented the German admiral from sending more U-boats to the Canadian area than he had originally intended. See Peyton-Ward, III, 538-539, 79/599, *DHH*.

67 The RCN destroyed no U-boats in Canadian waters during 1942, while USN vessels sank two, USN air forces sank two and the RCAF sank one (Small's destruction of U-754). See Hadley, "U-Boat Experience," 132.

68 Anderson to Joubert de la Ferté, 24 April 1942, 181.009 (6734), *DHH*.

69 Douglas, *Creation*, 535-536 and 540.

70 Ibid., 524.

71 Air Commodore N.R. Anderson, RCAF, Attached to Coastal Command, RAF to AOCinC, Coastal Command, RAF, 4 July 1941, 181.002 (D121), *DHH*; Peyton-Ward, III, 23, 79/599, *DHH*.

72 Memorandum, AOC No. 1 Group, St. John's, to EAC HQ, 20 December 1941, 181.002 (D173), *DHH*; AOC EAC to Power, 29 March 1942, 181.009 (D1147), *DHH*. It did not help either that the Coastal Command Operational Training Units operating in eastern Canada, which utilized Coastal Command Tactical Memoranda in their training, failed to pass the tactical information to Eastern Air Command. Douglas, *Creation*, 539-540.

73 Director of Armaments [G/C T.J. Desmond] to Director of Operations, 9 April 1942, HQS 28-6-3, Vol. 5273, RG 24, *LAC*.

74 Ibid.

75 Annis Interview.

76 Both the RCAF and the RCN adhered to the British Admiralty's conviction that the threat of submarines had been nullified by the introduction of the convoy system and the invention of Asdic, an underwater detection device known today as active sonar. Findings of a British Joint Planners report of 2 July 1936, as quoted in Captain D.V. Peyton-Ward,

The RAF in the Maritime War, Volume I: The Atlantic and Home Waters: The Prelude, April 1918-September 1939 (RAF Air Historical Branch Narrative), n.d., 151, 79/599, *DHH*.

77 Allan D. English, "The RAF Staff College and the Evolution of British Strategic Bombing Policy, 1922-1929," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (September 1993), 408-409, 416 and 426; Annis Interview. Indeed, not one senior officer in the RCAF had any firsthand experience with trade defence until Wing Commander C.L. Annis became the director of BR operations at AFHQ in August 1942. Douglas, *Creation*, 536.

78 Goette, "Joint Command and Control," 27.

79 Douglas, *Creation*, 539; CAS to RCAF London (signal written but not actually sent – to be used as a basis for further discussion between CAS and AMAS), 12 January 1943, Part 2, S.15-1-350, Vol. 5177, RG 24, *LAC*.

80 Douglas, *Creation*, 539.

81 Annis Interview.

82 Douglas, *Creation*, 465.

83 Ibid., 536.

84 Marc Milner, "Inshore ASW: the Canadian Experience in Home Waters," in W.A.B. Douglas, ed., *The RCN in Transition, 1910-1985* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988), 147.

85 Douglas, *Creation*, 541; No. 5 (BR) Squadron ORB, 8 January 1943, microfilm reel C-12,229, Vol. 22,603, RG 24, *LAC*.

86 No. 162 (BR) Squadron ORB, 8 January 1943, microfilm reel C-12,259, Vol. 22,632, RG 24, *LAC*.

87 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 2 January 1943; Goette, "Joint Command and Control," 70.

88 Annis, "I'll Never Forget," 65; Annis Interview; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 2 January 1943.

89 5 (BR) Squadron ORB, 5 January 1943.

90 "History of Eastern Air Command," 565-566; Douglas, *Creation*, 541. Quotation from Douglas. Douglas also notes that Small's efforts to increase the range of Cansos also went a long way towards Eastern Air Command's efforts to secure the Very-Long-Range Liberator aircraft needed to close the "Air Gap." Indeed, he remarked that Small's modified Cansos "went some way towards demonstrating the results [Eastern Air Command] might have achieved with Liberators."

91 Kealy, "A/S War East Coast 1942," 52; Notes on an Interview with Clare L. Annis, 3.

92 Kealy, "A/S War East Coast 1942," 80; 113 (BR) Squadron ORB, 23 December 1942. For more on Eastern Air Command's Operational

Research Section, see Peter M. Millman, "Operational Research in the RCAF During World War II," DHH Report, 2 August 1947, 77/510, *DHH*.

CHAPTER 5

The Lone Ranger: An Air Warfare Leadership Study of George Frederick "Buzz" Beurling

Dean Black

Buzz...wanted a Mustang to do his thing; the RAF would have given him one – like they did with all sorts of unusual types, but that was not the Canadian way. Everyone has to conform. Canadians are unable to cope with extraordinary people who sometimes are called heroes. Canadians can't stand heroes.[1]

Canada's infamous fighter ace George Beurling once considered himself without equal.[2] His Distinguished Service Order (DSO) citation described his skills and daring as "unexcelled."[3] Few allied fighter pilots could match him in combat at the controls of a Spitfire. In stark contrast, however, much of the Beurling historiography is not entirely complimentary. Additionally, "many of [the stories and legends] attached to Beurling are [considered] apocryphal."[4] In reference to Beurling, the term "leader" is an accolade that has escaped serious consideration.

However, evidence may be emerging that suggests Beurling possessed leadership skills overlooked by history. The aim herein is to consider this evidence in comparison to the performance of some of Beurling's contemporaries who were renowned for their leadership in air warfare. The question at hand concerns whether or not

LAC, PA-179687.

Pilot Officer George F. "Buzz" Beurling fighting against the enemy ... paperwork.

Beurling deserves similar accolades befitting a leader. Reflecting on caste, culture and courage provides an understanding of the kind of leadership for which Beurling might best be remembered and reveals the sorts of events that may have influenced the choices that Beurling made: caste, in the sense that far from being consistently provided with good examples of leadership early on, Beurling was often treated as an inferior since he was Canadian; culture, in terms of the fighter-tactics culture with which Beurling appears not to have been in complete agreement; and finally, courage, in the sense that while air warfare leaders tended to come from the ranks of the most courageous pilots, Beurling was especially so, displaying courage not just in the face of the enemy, but also in the face of his own superiors in his attempts to seek fundamental changes to the ways of air warfare in early-1944.

Experience tends to shape one's approach to future situations. In air warfare, the "LMF" or "lack of moral fibre" issue is a case in point. When a commanding officer (CO) was faced with having to lay a

charge of "LMF," he was required to provide a full report to his superior, the air officer commanding (AOC), which not only explained the relevant operational details, but also highlighted any particularly bad flying experiences that the individual in question may have had.[5] Such investigations often revealed a litany of horrible experiences including the loss of close friends, suggesting that these bad experiences were partly to blame for the individual's seemingly deteriorating emotional state.[6] In a similar fashion, this present investigation looks at Beurling's experiences for episodes that may explain his transformation into the courageous and tenacious warrior that he turned out to be. Just as one would have looked for any bad flying experiences that might have tempered a "LMF" assessment, this chapter looks for certain experiences that might serve to temper our views of Beurling's, at times, questionable actions.

Leadership in a fighter squadron is a difficult concept to quantify owing in part to a diversity of opinion. Group Captain W.G.G. Duncan Smith once wrote, "a fighter team was led by example and personality…in a spiritual way, for the [fighter pilot] leader could see but he could not touch [his wing-men]."[7] To another air power historian, one's ability to keep the enemy off one's tail defined one's leadership.[8] In contrast, the Commander of Strategic Air Command, General Curtis Lemay, believed, "responsibility [was] the most important attribute in a leader."[9] For the purpose of this examination, therefore, Beurling's eligibility for the title of leader will be considered in terms of the example that he set, his personality, his demonstrated combat flying skills and the responsibility that he showed for others.

To accomplish this, it is necessary to briefly explore Beurling's experiences throughout his operational tours. Beurling's Second World War military flying career divides neatly into three phases: his early service with 403 Squadron and 41 Squadron; his service with 249 Squadron; and, following a brief instructional tour and transfer from the Royal Air Force (RAF) to the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), his service with 403 Squadron and 412 Squadron.

Early Aviation Experiences

Beurling's generation grew up with air warfare lore written by First World War fighter pilots. Apparently, "[by the age of] 10 Beurling read every book and every comic on flying that he could get his hands on."[10] The concept of air warfare leadership was in its infancy as the First World War unfolded, but some of its important elements were present in the personal accounts of these early aviators. A look at two accounts reveals that First World War pilots were largely left to their own devices. Skills were certainly important, but not all leaders demonstrated responsibility to the extent seemingly implied by Lemay. James McCudden's *Flying Fury: Five Years in the Royal Flying Corps* is possibly one of the more detailed First World War memoirs written by a fighter pilot. As a British ace, McCudden's memoirs enjoyed two printings before the onset of the Second World War, one in 1918 and a second in 1930.

McCudden's account suggests that the concept of air leadership was undeveloped as late as 1918. If we think of air leadership in terms of one pilot leading others in close formation, the fact that air-to-air radios had not yet been perfected helps to explain this shortcoming. As a consequence, individualism prevailed when it came to air combat during the First World War. Flying skill seemed most important and the "lone wolf" style of air fighting seemed prevalent. To illustrate, on 20 July 1916, McCudden was one of five pilots joining a formation led by one Captain Maxwell. By this time, McCudden had been in theatre for over a year. As an observer, he had grown familiar with weather conditions, enemy behaviour, anti-aircraft artillery and the capabilities of his own aircraft. Within 30 minutes after take-off, weather obscured the ground in every direction. "[T]he formation [soon] dissolved and [McCudden] decided to get under the mist and follow the main road to Clairmarais."[11] While McCudden made it down, three of the other aircraft did not; six lives were lost. Had McCudden been able to both convince and communicate to the others that it would

LAC, PA-37422

Flying Officer Beurling recording his kills.

be best to follow him, the outcome may have been very different. The formation of five aircraft was truly in need of a leader.

William Avery “Billy” Bishop, like McCudden, teaches us that, while courage was of primary importance, flying skill alone defined the leader. Bishop published his memoirs, *Winged Warfare*, in 1918. While he acknowledges the leader’s role in terms of returning to the aid of a wingman, Bishop is today remembered for his “lone wolf” tactics, the most famous example of which involved an alleged early morning attack on an enemy airfield wherein, single-handedly, Bishop destroyed a number of enemy aircraft on the ground and in the air. Another renowned aviator from the First World War, Captain Albert Ball, was also famous for his “lone wolf” tactics and aggressiveness.[12] Bishop’s work differs from McCudden’s in one important respect, the degree to which he chooses to emphasize the importance of responsibility.

There are a number of references that indicate Bishop's acknowledgement of his duty to others.[13]

Beurling's study of flying went beyond an examination of allied aces. It is alleged that at the age of 18 or 19, while attempting to reach China via San Francisco, Beurling had an opportunity to learn aerobatics from Ernst Udet, one of Germany's fighter aces from the First World War.[14] However, while Beurling was supposedly in the United States, Udet was in Germany reshaping the German *Luftwaffe*. It is therefore improbable that the 18-year-old Beurling took flying lessons with Udet in 1938/39.[15] Perhaps it is more reasonable to say that while it seems unlikely that Beurling was personally trained by Udet, it cannot be denied that Beurling learned a great deal about flying from the great German fighter ace. One only needs to consider the impact aviation was having on young men like Beurling throughout the 1930s. For someone who had developed from a very early age an avid, if not an obsessive, interest in all things aviation, Beurling most probably took notice of everything written about Udet. On 23 July 1927, *The Globe and Mail* identified Udet as one of a handful of former German flying aces determined to cross the Atlantic to land in the United States "unexpectedly."[16] By 1931, Ernst Udet was an established celebrity. In Cleveland, Ohio, that year, Udet thrilled 53,000 spectators by ploughing furrows in the ground with his wingtip.[17] In 1933, Udet was in Los Angeles cavorting with the famous aviatrix Ruth Elder, who had made an unsuccessful bid to cross the Atlantic herself, six years earlier in 1927.[18] By November, Udet found himself in Toronto, featured as part of a show entitled "Saturday's Millions," held at the St. Clair theatre.[19] When he successfully affixed himself and his aeroplane to the Hindenburg in-flight on 12 March 1937, the story was front-page news in Canada.[20] One of the last Canadian reports about Udet described how he had set a speed record of 393.94 miles per hour in Germany.[21]

In summary, Udet was one of many famous aviators from the First World War who earned a living stunt-flying their way through the

Depression throughout North America, Europe and Africa. Beurling certainly looked on with more than a passing interest. The fact that he claimed to have worked with Udet[22] proves that Beurling was at least aware of the famous German ace's talents. Most important, Beurling would have taken away from such experiences and stories the extent to which individual technical skills made the pilot.

December 1941 to April 1942 - 403 Squadron and 41 Squadron

Despite being Canadian, Beurling joined Canada's 403 Squadron on 16 December 1941, not as a RCAF airman, but as a RAF pilot. The RCAF showed little interest in Beurling because his education was lacking. Despite being in the RAF, however, Beurling appears to have fallen out of favour with his first CO, Squadron Leader (S/L) (RAF) A.G. Douglas. Douglas acknowledged that Beurling's training reports were good. However, since Beurling was Canadian, "all the superflying in Christendom" would not make up for the liability of having been born in Canada.[23] After Douglas' departure, another RAF officer, S/L (RAF) C.N.S. "Ken" Campbell, was assigned to command 403 Squadron. Campbell acknowledged in his own memoirs that he had been dubbed "that good for nothin' limey" soon after his arrival.[24] Campbell seemed to possess the same sort of attitude towards Canadians that his predecessor had made known, for Campbell also publicly admonished the pilots telling them that they would all have to "change their Canadian ways."[25] Over time, both RAF commanding officers became popular leaders and proved courageous in battle. Early perceptions prevailed, however, especially for those like Beurling who found themselves frequently moving to different units.

Beurling left 403 Squadron three months after Campbell's arrival because the squadron was going "all Canadian." This meant only members of the RCAF were to be assigned to 403 Squadron. During his short time with the squadron, he managed only one operational sortie. It was on 24 March that Beurling finally got a taste of bat-

tle. It was during a large aerial "Circus"[26] that Beurling was attacked by as many as four enemy aircraft while flying in the back-of-the-pack number four position. He appears to have baited the enemy by straggling behind. When they pounced, Beurling suddenly dropped his flaps and wheels. Doing so brought his aircraft to a virtual standstill while the surprised enemy pilots flashed by, all of their bullets overshooting their mark.

By 10 April 1942, Beurling had flown another operational sortie, this one a large sweep. During this time, he was also involved in a ground incident, wherein two aircraft were damaged when Beurling, while taxiing his airplane, collided with another. This unfortunate incident came just days after Beurling was part of a dressing down by Wing Commander (W/C) (RAF) Scott-Malden who admonished the pilots for exaggerated claims and poor deflection shooting.[27]

When Beurling arrived at 41 Squadron, he was treated as a "rogue" pilot. Yet, again, Beurling felt like an outcast. The leadership of 41 Squadron ignored the operational experience that he had gained with 403. One of Beurling's fellow pilots, Bob Middlemiss, explained Beurling's short tour with 41 Squadron in the following way. It should be noted, however, that Beurling was credited with two kills during his time with 41 Squadron:

> One day Beurling was "Blue 4," at the back of the pack, when he spots four ME109s two o'clock high. Forty-six eyes scanned the sky but no one could see what Beurling claimed he could see. The leader asked if Beurling could still see the enemy aircraft, to which Beurling exclaimed 'Yes, Sir.' The enemy aircraft were getting closer and no one else in the formation had yet seen them, so Beurling broke out of formation and attacked. Everyone else had landed by the time Beurling arrived home. It was clear that he had fired his guns. He explained he had shot one of the aircraft down at a deflection angle of forty degrees.

> They developed his cinegun film, but there was no enemy aircraft in sight owing to the deflection angle. The rumour around the mess was that 'Beurling was a guy who wants a DFC [Distinguished Flying Cross].' A couple of days later the same thing happened and everyone was convinced, then, that Beurling was lying. A 'line shooter' they called him. Soon thereafter [Middlemiss] was chosen to be sent to Malta, to be followed some days later by Beurling. Everyone was pleased because they simply did not believe Beurling's claims. But, he had better eyesight than anyone.[28]

249 Squadron over Malta

The move was actually fortuitous. Malta and 249 Squadron were more appealing to Beurling for the tactics employed in theatre permitted much greater freedom of action than he had been accustomed to. Nevertheless, Beurling's preference for doing things his way apparently angered his own flight commander, Raoul Daddo-Langlois, and another pilot, Buck McNair, to such an extent that Beurling's CO, Laddie Lucas, had to step in and reprove the young Canadian.[29] Daddo-Langlois was apparently concerned with the "mixed reports" regarding Beurling's penchant for heading off on his own and disobeying orders.[30] This is surprising since Daddo-Langlois himself had apparently received quite a dressing down from his previous CO for precisely the same thing.[31]

An RAF flight lieutenant (F/L) named Eric Hetherington once said that since Beurling was not a tactician, he had to be led to the right place at the right time so that he could "do his stuff."[32] In contrast, Beurling claimed that since he and his fellow pilots on Malta were always outnumbered by the enemy, "…upstairs it was usually every man for himself."[33] Pilots rarely had the time on the ground to organize properly into anything more than "sections" of two aircraft. "To get up at all was an achievement; to form a wing practically impossible."[34]

Returning to Hetherington's claim, author Brian Cull[35] has explained that Beurling downed two Italian Macchi fighter aircraft within seconds, while "Hetherington sought cover in the clouds." Since Beurling later had to show Hetherington the wreckage of the two Italian fighters that he had destroyed, Hetherington clearly had at most a minor role in the engagement and certainly did not appear to have led Beurling into position to attack the two targets.[36] The fact that Hetherington's claim is an isolated case raises questions as to its credibility. A review of air fighting accounts over Malta provides no other such allegations.[37] In fact, in many situations, it appears that Beurling himself may have often led the charge into the enemy.[38] The end result of Beurling's Malta tour was a remarkable score. By late-October 1942, Beurling had 28 and 1/3 enemy aircraft destroyed to his credit, two of which resulted from his short tour with 41 Squadron. Additionally, Beurling had been twice awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM) and had received a commission, a DFC and a DSO. Canada's national newspaper exclaimed Beurling's "Career Unique in RAF."[39]

CFJIC, PL-10976

Beurling recovering in an English hospital.

403 Squadron and 412 Squadron

Beurling reported to 403 Squadron for a second time in mid-1943. Many knew that "his combat flying record far outstripped any other pilot on the squadron."[40] Despite his one-of-a-kind record, Beurling was received much as he had been 16 months earlier in 41 Squadron. Beurling's RAF wing commander, J.E. "Johnnie" Johnson, who at the time had 25 kills to Beurling's 28, made sure that 127 Airfield's two COs did not permit Beurling to play "lone wolf." Johnson advised Beurling that Malta tactics had no part over occupied Europe and that he would be rewarded only if he conformed.[41] Consequently, restrictions were imposed on Beurling as they had been in 41 Squadron. A few days later, Beurling was out rabbit hunting with the squadron padre in a nearby meadow when a pair of irate farmers confronted them. The padre responded to the unfriendly land-owners by introducing them to "Canada's leading fighter pilot," to which one of the farmers replied "you Colonials should go home; Britain could well manage the war without your help."[42]

With one exception – an assignment as Wing Gunnery Officer[43] – Beurling appears to have been employed in a manner that may have fallen somewhat short of recognizing his true capabilities, thus serving to discredit his past accomplishments. A consistent tendency to assign him as wingman probably did not sit well. He probably thought he could do more while leading or operating on his own and employing different tactics.

Did Beurling take exception to his assigned role in 403 Squadron? It seems that he was not the only one, for there are indications that others were displeased as well. For example, Hugh Constant Godefroy, CO of 403 Squadron at the time, had grown tired of playing bridesmaid to Johnson. Johnson's eyesight was not as good as Godefroy's. Consequently, if Godefroy spotted enemy aircraft, "Johnnie" insisted on being led onto the targets. As a result, "Johnnie" was always getting first crack and his score con-

tinued to mount. In the late fall of 1943, Godefroy began to clam-up when he spotted targets first, deciding not to inform "Johnnie" so that he (Godefroy) might finally get first crack for a change.[44]

Godefroy's unusual, if not ominous, reference to a "Cock Robin" in the squadron should also give us pause. The children's nursery rhyme character "Cock Robin" was the victim of treachery, assassinated by a fellow bird, the sparrow. The symbolism of Godefroy's analogy is threatening. Did Godefroy believe that "Cock Robin" had been done in by one of his fellow squadron pilots? Godefroy appears to claim that "Cock Robin" was a flight lieutenant and a former flying instructor with little operational experience who insisted on leading formations, rather than following them, because he wanted to amass a respectable kill tally as early as possible. If such a feud had indeed poisoned the atmosphere in the mess, Beurling would have been affected.[45]

Was Beurling aware of any such animosity? Many others knew that Beurling's visual acuity was extraordinary, even better than Godefroy's. Is it possible that Beurling felt that he was being sidelined by those more interested in improving their scores, something they believed would be that much more possible with Beurling protecting their tail? One former fighter pilot has claimed that men like Godefroy and Johnson wanted nothing more than for Beurling to "fly less [so as] not to get too many Huns, for professionally he would then surpass [these] chair-borne clots."[46]

On 28 October 1943,[47] Hugh Godefroy appointed Beurling flight commander.[48] Beurling was apparently not interested in the job.[49] Very soon thereafter, Beurling took to low flying in the squadron's Tiger Moth, twice diving on Godefroy's working quarters. Beurling's low flying had become legendary, but these low passes seemed rather personal.[50] When Godefroy posted a regulation forbidding the low flying on or about 1 November 1943, Beurling promptly took off in the Tiger Moth and buzzed Godefroy's cara-

CFJIC, PL-11975

Beurling on a goodwill tour of Canada, in the company of the nation's Second World War Prime Minister, W.L. Mackenzie King, and eager onlookers.

van a third time. Godefroy placed him under arrest. A court-martial was averted only when the Minister for Air, "Chubby" Powers, intervened on behalf of the Prime Minister. Godefroy was eventually persuaded to post Beurling from 403 Squadron (127 Airfield) to 126 Airfield under the watchful eye of W/C Buck McNair. Beurling eventually ended up in the ranks of 412 Squadron.[51]

Caste

Although 403 Squadron was the first Canadian fighter squadron formed overseas, the unit's first six COs were not Canadian. When in December 1941 he was presented with Beurling's respectable training report, 403's fourth CO, RAF S/L A.G. Douglas, chose to berate the newly arrived non-commissioned pilot for being Canadian.[52] Douglas' successor, Campbell, seems to have taken a similar approach to the Canadians under his command. This was

not unusual for the time: "…class distinctions in the RAF [struck] Canadians as undemocratic. [An] RAF report [stated that Canadians were] impetuous, sometimes childish, erratic, unsophisticated [and possessing] a sense of inferiority."[53] To some, Canadian non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were considered "undisciplined savages."[54] The fostering of inequality amongst men was an accepted practice in Britain.[55] It is interesting to note that Godefroy also had problems with Douglas while serving in 401 Squadron. Later, during a chance encounter in 1943, Douglas treated Godefroy with more respect. Godefroy had been promoted to wing commander by this time and Godefroy suspected it was this higher rank that explained Douglas' more civilized demeanour.[56]

"When a new pilot joined a squadron his first trip was normally flown as wingman to the Commanding Officer, thus protected by the rest of the squadron. When Pilot Officer [P/O] Gordon Hoben transferred from 102 Squadron flying bombers to 403 Squadron flying fighters, his new CO, Squadron Leader C.N.S. "Ken" Campbell took him under his wing, in this way. From time to time it was also not unusual to see experienced non-commissioned pilots serving as Flight Leads in place of Flying Officers."[57] Beurling was afforded neither privilege in 41 Squadron. Instead, he was apparently assigned the most dangerous position in a fighter formation. Without protection, Beurling was understandably upset with his back-of-the-pack role, a role he would occasionally be assigned over a year later with 403 Squadron.

There would seem to be no other explanation for his treatment other than caste. It is remarkable, then, that while flying with 41 Squadron, Beurling broke formation to single-handedly fend off enemy fighters that 23 other pilots denied seeing. Lloyd Hunt, President of the Canadian Fighter Pilots' Association, tells us that 41 Squadron's pilots "Sent Beurling to Coventry," implying that Beurling was shunned in the worst way.[58] It became clear later in the war that "Beurling carried some very strong resentment to former…Commanders."[59] Sadly, Beurling probably thought that

he was getting the same poor treatment when he reported to 403 Squadron for his second tour and his negative encounter with two local farmers would not have put him any more at ease.

Culture

When in late-1943 Beurling was installed as a flight commander in 412 Squadron, one newcomer recalled Beurling's leadership and compassion in that role, seeking out newcomers, making them feel welcome and taking the time to explain how things worked around the squadron.[60] Another recalled that Beurling spent considerable time in London lobbying senior Canadian air force leaders for the means and permission to fight the air war over the continent on different terms.[61] Beurling, it seems, was arguing for new tactics to augment, if not replace, the "Circus" and "Rhubarb"[62] tactics that had been the mainstay for almost two years. While Brian Nolan describes Beurling's preference for "Ranger" missions and his quest to form a flight of Mustangs,[63] he also claims that Air Officer Commander-in-Chief, L.S. Breadner, refused to authorize the plan. Renowned air force historian Arthur Bishop, son of "Billy" Bishop, now seems to be in disagreement.[64]

In *They Shall Grow Not Old*,[65] it is revealed that Flying Officer (F/O) J.Z. Zabek was flying with 412 Squadron on 14 February 1944 when his aircraft crashed five minutes after take-off. The 412 Squadron Operations Record Book for that day divulges that this was a "Ranger"[66] mission involving F/L G.F. Beurling, F/O R.P. Vatcher, F/O F.T. Murray and F/O J.Z. Zabek. Of the 15 accidents that occurred in 412 Squadron during the period 7 May 1943 to 29 June 1944, only Zabek's matches that described by Arthur Bishop in his new epilogue to Beurling's original autobiography. Zabek's incident had all the hallmarks of engine failure likely caused by fuel starvation. Squadrons operating the new Spitfire IX aircraft in late-1943 were complaining about engine failures being triggered when pilots switched over to the auxiliary fuel (drop) tanks.[67] These failures led Beurling's wing commander,

Buck McNair, to post an order for pilots to climb to a minimum of 1,000 feet above ground level before switching tanks.

Contrary to what Nolan has said, since this "Ranger" mission did get airborne, Breadner may have approved Beurling's request. Only one important difference is to be noted: Beurling did not get the P-51 Mustangs for which he had been lobbying.[68] Beurling was not asking for the impossible since the Mustang variant that he wanted was available.[69] However, Beurling was fighting an air power culture beholden first to fighter tactics to which he had found it difficult to ascribe, and, secondly, to the primacy of the bomber.

In regards to the former fighter tactics, major actors in the debate included Beurling's boss, W/C J.E. "Johnnie" Johnson, whose former mentor, the legless Douglas Bader, was one of the strongest proponents, if not the inventor of, the "Big Wing" concept.[70] Nevertheless, Bader's ideas "leaned on a past belonging to a different phase of technology."[71] Despite 12 Group's reserve role north of London, to that of 11 Group over London and Kent, Bader felt he was missing out on too much of the action and consequently demanded his squadron (number 242) be alerted the moment radar picked up the massing *Luftwaffe* formations over France. Unfortunately, this meant that the reserve (12 Group) would be committed to battle before the primary means of defence (11 Group) would be. Claims made by Bader and his wing of three to five squadrons proved to be twice what the *Luftwaffe* actually lost in battle. Nevertheless, Bader exploited the exaggerated claims, arguing how effective massed formations were and these tactics solidified in every corner of the minds of many of Bader's subordinates and admirers. Months later, Beurling would confront this mindset and find it difficult to accept such tactics.

Beurling's fight was also with the air power culture that ascribed to the adage "the bomber will always get through," meaning that fighter escort of bombers was ill advised, if not unnecessary.[72] Sir Charles Portal, Chief of the Air Staff early in the war, was

opposed to any suggestion that a long-range fighter should be designed so as to be able to escort bombers. Portal claimed such a design was impossible and would bring certain death to his fighter pilots because extending the range of a fighter aircraft could only come at the expense of agility and speed. This might help explain why despite its introduction in early-1942, the P-51 Mustang would not be used in the long-range bomber escort role for another 16 to 18 months. In early-1943, General "Hap" Arnold, Commanding General US Army Air Force, was incensed with Portal's "incomprehensible and unacceptable" preference for leaving 1,461 fighter aircraft and pilots idle on the ground instead of employing them in the escort role, something Arnold believed was possible.[73] Again, the requirement to provide bombers with fighter escort simply did not seem to be a priority for Portal. Additionally, the RAF had opted to conduct bomber operations at night, thereby reducing the need for fighter escorts.

Beurling had apparently grown tired of standing readiness day after day. One day he decided to ignore the order to stand ready, proclaiming, "the Battle of Britain had ended years ago." Perhaps he sensed air combat tactics were in need of transformation. Each side in an air battle was able to amass large formations and seemed to prefer the attrition battle that resulted when opposing formations tangled. Beurling seems to have had a different approach in mind. He likely realized that the extended-range P-51 Mustangs were capable of more than just protecting bomber crews on long-range escort duties. After all, he was on strength with 403 Squadron two years earlier, on 16 April 1942, when pilots were treated to a Mustang performance demonstration on the North Weald airfield.[74] The Mustang became operational the following month and it was soon thereafter that "the RAF realized that the same thing could be done to the Mustang that had been done to the Manchester: Take out the Allison engine and install a Merlin."[75]

By June 1943, the P-51B had evolved such that it could outpace, out-dive and out-turn enemy aircraft.[76] Beurling's stint as a fly-

ing instructor at the Sutton Bridge Gunnery School that summer most probably exposed him to a serious debate of these issues. By January 1944, the range and agility of the P-51 Mustang was precisely the kind of aircraft Beurling needed. Unfortunately, for his "Ranger" mission, Beurling had to rely on Spitfire IX aircraft fitted with long-range auxiliary fuel tanks. Zabek's engine appears to have faltered as Beurling's four-plane formation proceeded on the mission at low-level. With insufficient altitude and time to attempt a restart of his engine, and without altitude so as to be able to parachute to safety, Zabek appears to have had only one option: a forced landing. Sadly, with Zabek's death, Beurling's "Ranger" came to an ignominious end.

When "Johnnie" Johnson lined-up his COs to oppose Beurling the moment that he (Beurling) arrived at 127 Airfield, Johnson, as the leader, was "imposing his values and assumptions" on the most senior officers within his wing.[77] Johnson's impositions, values and assumptions were months and years in the making, having been formulated since the earliest days of the Battle of Britain. They had therefore taken firm root, thus creating a culture that defined not just how things were to be done, but also "defined the kinds of leadership deemed acceptable" within his wing. Accordingly, Beurling was deemed outside of this framework from the outset.

Courage

The culture of an organization such as an air force wing can also be strongly influenced through the allocation of rewards.[78] Since leaders impose their values and assumptions on the organization to ensure that members do not deviate from a chosen path, leaders institute or hold sway over a system of rewards for those whose performance best reflects the values and assumptions imposed. With these cultural considerations in mind, it is now instructive to look at Beurling's rewards. Comparing Beurling's citations with those written for other sterling performers reveals an interesting difference.

Beurling's citation for the DFM made note of his numerous victories and claimed that he "displayed great skill and courage in the face of the enemy."[79] When a bar to his DFM was awarded, indicating a second award, the citation explained Beurling's "courage and determination [were] a source of inspiration to all."[80] When Beurling, now commissioned, won the DFC, the citation described him as "[a] relentless fighter, whose determination and will…won [the] admiration of his colleagues...[setting] an example in keeping with the highest traditions of the Royal Air Force."[81] As with his previous citations, the numbers of enemy aircraft damaged and destroyed were identified. Finally, his DSO citation included the remark that he had "destroyed a further six enemy aircraft, bringing his total victories to twenty-eight."[82]

Not one reference to "leadership" can be found in Beurling's four commendations. There may be a simple reason: Beurling rarely led a formation of pilots in battle and, when he did, it would appear that he preferred breaking formation to go after enemy aircraft himself but, in the process of so doing, abandoned the wingman's responsibility to which he had been assigned. Long after the Second World War had ended, Air Vice-Marshal James Edgar "Johnnie" Johnson, in referring to leadership, once explained that "…the greatest air fighters have a high sense of duty…and during the fight his pilots know he will watch over them and bring them home."[83] Beurling's habit of breaking formation was infuriating to Godefroy and others.[84] While there should be no doubt as to Beurling's courage, it was the poor example that he was setting for the *ab initio* pilots with which Godefroy and Johnson were likely most concerned.

While Beurling was clearly setting a bad example in the air, such was not necessarily the case on the ground. As for imparting his skills on others, Beurling was repeatedly asked to serve as a gunnery instructor at the squadron and wing levels, to share with others his deflection shooting secrets. The lectures he gave "clearly [demonstrated] that he had thought out the finer points of shoot-

ing much more than any of…[the other pilots] had."[85] Sadly, however, his seemingly exceptional instructional capabilities did not garner sufficient attention insofar as assessing this aspect of leadership. The fact that Beurling spent most of his flying career as a NCO may have had something to do with this situation. A thorough review of hundreds of other citations reveals that the terms "leader" and "leadership" with rare exception appear to have been reserved for commissioned officers only.[86]

If Beurling wondered what constituted meritorious service, he probably concluded that courage and the number of aircraft shot down were all that mattered. Beurling's courage, skill and example in matters of air warfare compared more than favourably with that of others who have also been referred to as leaders, yet Beurling was never considered a leader. Additionally, as was highlighted in his quest for a "Ranger," Beurling exhibited a rare high standard of courage, one marked by a drive to secure fundamental change to the pre-D-Day fighter tactics employed in air warfare.[87] Despite setting an inspiring example of courage in the air, despite an unexcelled skill at destroying enemy aircraft in almost any situation and despite setting an excellent example by providing gunnery instruction many times, Beurling's overall performance in the eyes of his immediate superiors does not appear to have been sufficiently worthy to have earned him the accolade of "leader."

Conclusion

Perhaps in the spirit of René Descartes, Beurling subscribed to the notion that knowledge was to be based on reason and observation, not tradition or authority. His early experiences with 41 Squadron convinced him that he was his own best keeper. Taking matters into his own hands was not simply a defence mechanism; he learned such an approach from aviation's best, before the war had begun. Reason and observation revealed to him that for as long as he was designated to fly "tail-end-charlie," he would be at much greater risk. He reported to 41 Squadron in April 1942 and was treated "like a kid

fresh from the [Operational Training Unit]."[88] Unfortunately, Beurling already had operational experience and the thought of being relegated to the number four slot "stuck in [his] crop [sic]."[89] Submitting to tradition and authority was a threat to Beurling's well-being. The acrimony that developed between him and the other officer pilots who demanded he stay on their wings to protect them was probably a life-threatening imposition to Beurling.

First World War air warfare experience suggests that heroic pilots possessed a fighting spirit. Experience also reveals that flying without the benefit of mutual support provided by a wingman contributed to the fighter pilot's short life expectancy. Not surprisingly, air warfare in the early part of the Second World War reflected these same realities and other lessons. Consequently, fighter pilot leaders appear to have been those who demonstrated two things: courage in battle and a willingness to take others under their wing to teach them what they knew. By these standards of air warfare leadership, it is evident that Beurling deserves some credit, but evidently not enough to earn him the unqualified label of leader.

Beyond Beurling's penchant for teaching, there is evidence to show that he possessed a rare high degree of both physical and moral courage. Beurling continually demonstrated the courage of his convictions, specifically, his desire to encourage fundamental change within the air force. He continually insisted that greater emphasis be put on a tactic referred to as a "Ranger." In the end, his persistence paid off and senior air force officers relented...to an extent. On its own, this achievement needs to be considered for what it probably was: proof that Beurling was a leader not simply because he was capable of demonstrating courage in the face of the enemy, but also moral courage. He did not shy away from confronting his superiors to institute change that he felt was necessary. After all, a leader serves as a point man for change and change is precisely what Beurling was demanding when many around him might have seemed more comfortable with tradition.

The aim of this chapter has been to consider "Buzz" Beurling in terms of leadership. To achieve this aim, a framework was developed based on an analysis of First World War air force literature and Second World War-era reward commendations. The framework also considered those legendary air force officers who were, and still are, considered to be great leaders in their own right. McCudden, Bishop, Udet, Johnson, Godefroy and McNair were all tremendous leaders. They are today considered *bona fide* leaders because they set a rare example of courage in the face of the enemy; they inspired their men to do as they did; and, most of them recognized the importance of imparting their experiences and skills on others to enhance both their chances of survival and their effectiveness.

"Buzz" Beurling did these things and more. Unfortunately, he failed to conceal his animosity towards, if not his disdain for, many authority figures. Breaking formation and abandoning his wingmen was perhaps the worst example to have set at the time, even though combat tactics may have been evolving. But, concluding that Beurling's poor behaviour is to be blamed only on Beurling himself is to accept the adage that only winners deserve to write history. History indicates that 41 Squadron's leadership ignored Beurling's earlier operational experience, ignored his early warnings of approaching enemy aircraft and discredited any and all of his claims. Sending Beurling "to Coventry" was not the answer, nor did it reflect well on leaders within 41 Squadron.

Understandably, one can empathize with Beurling and perhaps consider the decisions made by 41 Squadron's leadership in a different light. When 403 Squadron's and 127 Airfield's leaders figuratively constrained Beurling, they effectively stifled a man with more than 28 kills to his credit, the highest scoring ace on both sides of the conflict in the Malta theatre.[90] Reason and observation did little for Beurling except to confirm what may have been his complete distrust for many of those in authority positions. He appears to have decided to fight for what he believed in. While his tactics may have been questionable, his objectives do make

sense. Beurling appears to have been on the leading edge of a battle for fundamental change and there are indications that he was making some progress. To his credit, his 31⅓ kills were indicative of his courage and technical skill, but these may have only got him into the air chief marshal's office to argue for different approaches to air warfare in the latter phase of the Second World War. The courage of his convictions and the quality of his argument failed to carry him the rest of the way. Nevertheless, Beurling, it would seem, deserves another look and, perhaps, deserves to be considered a leader in many respects.

Endnotes

1 Norman Franks, *Buck McNair: Canadian Spitfire Ace* (London: Grub Street, 2001), comments made by Flight Lieutenant Doug Matheson. See http://baileyprints.nostripes.com/rbailey/prints/defiance-at-dieppe.htm.

2 George F. Beurling and Leslie Roberts, *Malta Spitfire, The Buzz Beurling Story: Canada's World War II Daredevil Pilot* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2002), ix.

3 *London Gazette*, 16 October 1942.

4 Don Carlson, "Flight Lieutenant George F. Beurling," in Lloyd Hunt, ed., *We Band of Brothers* (Ottawa: Canadian Fighter Pilots' Association, 1992), 22.

5 John McCarthy, "Aircrew and 'Lack of Moral Fibre' in the Second World War," *War & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (September 1984), 87-88. For more discussion of LMF, see also Mark K. Wells, *Courage and Air Warfare: The Allied Experience in the Second World War* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 206, and, Allan D. English, *The Cream of the Crop: Canadian Aircrew 1939-1945* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

6 See Dean C. Black, "Courage and Fear: The Story of Pilot Officer Gordon Hoben and a Spitfire dubbed 'The Canadian Policeman,'" in *Airforce: The Magazine of Canada's Air Force Heritage*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 53-58.

7 W.G.G. Duncan Smith, *Spitfire into Battle* (London: John Murray Publishers, 2002), 46.

8 David R. Mets, "Carl Spaatz: A Model for Leadership?" in Wayne Thompson, ed., *Air Leadership* (Washington: Office of Air Force History, 1986), 20.

9 Ibid.

10 Peter Pigott, "Beurling, George Frederick (Buzz)," in Peter Hounslow, *Flying Canucks: Famous Canadian Aviators* (Toronto: Hounslow Press, 1994), 23.

11 James McCudden, VC, *Flying Fury: Five Years in the Royal Flying Corps* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000), 94.

12 J.E. "Johnnie" Johnson, *Full Circle: The Story of Air Fighting* (London: Cassell & Co., 1964), 274.

13 Billy Bishop, *Winged Warfare* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1990), 175.

14 Edmund Cosgrove, *Canada's Fighting Pilots* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company, Ltd., 1965), 143.

15 Brian Nolan, *Hero: The Buzz Beurling Story* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 22-23.

16 Special Cable, "Germans are Keen to Fly Atlantic," *The Globe and Mail*, 23 July 1927, 7.

17 Associated Press, "British Ace's Daring, Humor Take Cleveland by Storm," *The Globe and Mail*, 4 September 1931, 1.

18 *The Globe and Mail*, 15 July 1933, 17.

19 *The Toronto Daily Star*, 12 November 1933, 12. The proper title of "SOS Iceberg" may have been "SOS Eisbergh."

20 Associated Press, "Udet Hooks Plane to Hindenburg in Mid-Air," *The Globe and Mail*, 13 March 1937, 1.

21 "Flies at 393 MPH: Udet of Germany Sets Up New Airplane Speed Mark," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 6 June 1938, 1.

22 Nolan, *Hero*, 22-23.

23 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 84.

24 See Ken Campbell, "How Many Lives Has a Cat?," personal wartime diary, 95.

25 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 88. See also, Campbell, "How Many Lives Has a Cat?," 94-95.

26 John Terraine, author of *The Right of the Line*, explains the term "Circus" in this way: When it was clear that the air defence of Britain had been won, in the early part of the Second World War, senior leaders within the Royal Air Force concluded that offensive tactics were now called for. Air Marshals Sholto Douglas, Sir Charles Portal and Leigh-Mallory and Lord Trenchard designed sweeps of massed fighters – or 'Rhubarbs' – to "lean toward France." However, the enemy only took notice when the sweeps of massed fighters were sent on offensive patrols while accompanying large numbers of bombers to which had been assigned targets throughout France and Germany. These latter joint operations involving

both fighters and bombers were known as "Circuses." See John Terraine, *The Right of the Line: The Royal Air Force in the European War, 1939-1945* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997), 285-286.

27 Canada, Department of National Defence, 403 Squadron (RCAF), Operations Record Book.

28 Interview with Honorary Colonel Wing Commander (Ret'd) R.G. Middlemiss, 3 October 2005, London, England.

29 Hunt, *We Band of Brothers*, 119.

30 James Holland, *Fortress Malta: An Island under Siege, 1940-1943* (London: Open Books, Ltd., 2003), 303.

31 See Laddie Lucas, *Thanks for the Memory: Unforgettable Characters in Air Warfare, 1939-45* (Covent Garden, London: Stanley Paul, 1990), 77-78. Daddo-Langlois had been authorized to fly a 30-minute training flight one day, in 66 Squadron, but instead chose to fly 120 nautical miles across the English Channel over to enemy territory in Brittany, France, and shoot at anything he could see – on his own. On the return flight, he collided with a telegraph pole. Miraculously he had been able to fly the aircraft back for a safe landing.

32 James Holland, *Fortress Malta*, 348.

33 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 155.

34 E-mail correspondence, Mark Crame, former 609 Squadron (RAF) pilot commenting on there being no time for tactics for those fighting over the Island of Malta, 13 September 2004.

35 Brian Cull, *Spitfires over Malta: The Epic Air Battles of 1942* (London: Grub Street, 2005), 207.

36 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 156.

37 See Holland, *Fortress Malta*; Cull, *Spitfires over Malta*; and Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*.

38 Dan McCaffery, *Air Aces: The Lives and Times of Twelve Canadian Fighter Pilots* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, Ltd., 1990), 124.

39 *The Globe and Mail*, 24 October 1942, 3.

40 Carlson, "Flight Lieutenant George F. Beurling," 23. Carlson was the Squadron Padre for 403 Squadron in the summer and fall of 1943, when Beurling showed up for his second tour with the squadron.

41 "Johnnie" Johnson, *Wing Leader* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Ltd., 2000), 185. See also, Hugh Constant Godefroy, *Lucky Thirteen* (Stittsville: Canada's Wings, Inc., 1983), 200-201.

42 Carlson, "Flight Lieutenant George F. Beurling," 24.

43 Correspondence with Wing Commander (Ret'd) Bob Middlemiss, November 2003.

44 Godefroy, *Lucky Thirteen*, 197-198.

45 Ibid., 193-194.

46 Jerry Billing, *A Knave Among Knights in their Spitfires* (Winnipeg: Bunker to Bunker Books, 1995).

47 The semi-official war diary states that Beurling took over as Flight Commander on 25 October 1943, the day following the loss of F/L Southwood.

48 Interview with Bob Middlemiss, October 2003.

49 Godefroy, *Lucky Thirteen*, 221.

50 Ibid., 226. Hugh Godefroy placed Beurling under open arrest and advised his superior (Air Vice-Marshal Broadhurst) that he was proceeding with a court-martial. Also see, George J. Demare, "The Beurling I Knew," *Airforce* (April 1996). Also see, http://www.constable.ca/beurling.htm for an account of a low flying incident while Beurling was on strength with a training unit.

51 The Commanding Officer of 412 Squadron (George Keefer) apparently felt rather inferior to Beurling as he did not think he could properly lead someone who had a DSO, DFC, DFM and Bar, as did Beurling. This, it is explained, led McNair to the decision to keep Beurling under his personal care.

52 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 84.

53 Brereton Greenhous, Stephen J. Harris, William C. Johnston and William G.P. Rawling, *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force*, Volume III (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 49.

54 Spencer Dunmore and William Carter, *Reap the Whirlwind: the Untold Story of 6 Group, Canada's Bomber Force of World War II* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 154-157. See also, English, *The Cream of the Crop*, 117-122.

55 John Terraine, *The Right of the Line: The Royal Air Force in the European War, 1939-1945* (Chatham: Wordsworth Editions Ltd., 1997), 464-466.

56 Godefroy, *Lucky Thirteen*, 231.

57 Correspondence with the author, 17 April 2006.

58 Hunt, *We Band of Brothers*, 115.

59 Carlson, "Flight Lieutenant George F. Beurling," 24.

60 Interview, 8 September 2001.

61 Confidential interview, 17 January 2004. According to the interviewee, at times Beurling was rarely seen around 412 Squadron. Many had heard that he was often in London pleading his case for senior staff to pro-

vide him with the proper aircraft and authority to roam the continent freely, to hunt for enemy aircraft.

62 See endnote 26.

63 Nolan, *Hero*, 109.

64 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 236-247, especially 245.

65 Les Allison and Harry Hayward, *They Shall Grow Not Old* (Brandon: Leech Printing Ltd., 1996), 841.

66 A "Ranger" involved as many as four aircraft roaming over the continent at very low altitude looking to ambush *Luftwaffe* aircraft taking off or landing. See "Ranger Over France," in Pierre Clostermann, *The Big Show* (London: Cassell, 2004), 107-111. It is difficult to determine precisely when "Ranger" missions were first executed. According to Clostermann, the first one would appear to have taken place on or about 20 December 1943. See Greenhous et al., *The Crucible of War*, 264 and 274. The official history seems to indicate that an early "Ranger" may have been launched circa September 1943 and had become more common as a mission to replace "Rhubarbs" by November 1943. For an explanation of the term "Rhubarb" see endnote 26.

67 Norman L. Franks, *Royal Air Force Fighter Command Losses*, Volume 3, 15, and Volume 2, 134.

68 Confidential interview, 17 January 2004.

69 John Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth: How Hitler and the Allies Misread the Strategic Realities of World War II* (New York: Perennial, 2004), 200-201.

70 Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, 551-552 and 703-704.

71 Ibid., 197.

72 Plenty has been written about this mindset generally attributed to the father of air power, Italian philosopher Giulio Douhet who wrote *Command of the Air*. Amongst the more important works on the issue of bombers and fighters, see David Divine, *The Broken Wing: A Study in the British Exercise of Air Power* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1966), and, Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth*.

73 Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, Appendix G, 704.

74 Canada, Department of National Defence, 403 Squadron (RCAF) Operations Record Book.

75 Mosier, *The Blitzkrieg Myth*, 200-201.

76 Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, 551-552 and 703-704.

77 Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992) as quoted in Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 17-18.

78 English, *Understanding Military Culture*, 22.

79 *London Gazette*, 28 July 1942.

80 Ibid., 4 September 1942.

81 Ibid., 16 October 1942.

82 Ibid., 3 November 1942.

83 Johnson, *Full Circle*, 275. Johnson is unequivocal with respect to the importance of leadership in air combat. While great technical prowess led to tremendous success for the "lone-wolf" types, such as Bishop and Ball, it was the pilot who possessed comparable technical skills coupled with tremendous leadership that enjoyed the greatest results and success. In Air Vice-Marshal "Johnnie" Johnson's *Wing Leader* (Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co., 2000), Johnson emphasizes the importance of teamwork to George Frederick Beurling (see p. 183). On this occasion, Beurling has just reported to 127 Wing and Johnson feels it necessary to explain that the "lone-wolf" tactics he grew accustomed to in Malta are simply not applicable to the European theatre of operations where the *Luftwaffe* is used to operating with 50 aircraft at a time and the abundance of flak makes two-plane missions unworkable. Norman Franks was clear about the importance of leadership in terms of how much other men depended on the leader. In *Buck McNair, Canadian Spitfire Ace: The Story of Group Captain R.W. McNair* (London: Grub Street, 2001), 2, Franks explains that "[owing to deteriorating sight in his left eye McNair] knew he was becoming a danger to others [including] himself [in that]…men relied on [McNair's] tactical thinking and the ability to judge instantly a situation, and that judgment would be marred if [McNair] couldn't see immediately any problems that developed in the air. War in a fighter aeroplane was instant, immediate, needing quick reactions; there was no room for hesitation for whatever reason." According to Mark Wells in *Courage and Air Warfare*, 95, in fighter squadrons "…life itself [depended] on the trust and mutual confidence [between] two men." In an interview with Honorary Colonel (427 Squadron) Wing Commander (Ret'd) Robert G. Middlemiss, DFC, CD, in November 2003, Middlemiss emphasized the talent of McNair whom he said would choose to oversee the entire fight, involving all his wingmen and other pilots, rather than single out an enemy aircraft for an attack. In this way, McNair was able to convey instructions and, in a sense, watch over his flock as they fought it out. Middlemiss' admiration for McNair was clear to the present author. It should be noted that Middlemiss flew with 403 Squadron in the summer-fall period of 1943.

84 See Monty Berger and Brian Jeffrey Street, *Invasions Without Tears* (Toronto: Random House, 1994), 24-25. The authors describe an incident wherein Godefroy was leading the squadron on a sweep that was truly

uneventful. The intelligence officer debriefed them as a group, upon their return, and all of them said nothing happened – except Beurling. Beurling claimed an FW-190 enemy aircraft shot down. The entire group, but mostly Godefroy, was apparently struck with disbelief. Godefroy mocked Beurling by asking how he could have possibly shot down an aircraft mindful of the fact that Beurling was number 4, at the back of the formation. Beurling explained that he saw a target in his mirror, at quite a distance, peeled off without telling anyone, and shot it down. Beurling's gun film proved him correct.

85 Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, MP, *The Air Battle for Malta: The Diaries of a Fighter Pilot* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1981), 122.

86 One can view all of the award citations for Canadian aircrew at www.airforce.ca. A data-mining experiment was carried out in search of the word "leader" amongst hundreds of individual entries. Only citations for two non-commissioned officers (Flight Sergeants J.A. Nicholson and J.A. Perkins) included the word "leader" or "leadership;" both were in command of an aircraft or an aero engine repair section or units. All other entries that included the aforementioned "words" were found in entries for commissioned officers only.

87 Group Commanders employed Wing Tactics Advisors to assess both tactics and leadership in their units during 1943-1944. See Godefroy, *Lucky Thirteen*, 245.

88 Beurling and Roberts, *Malta Spitfire*, 100.

89 Ibid.

90 McCaffery, *Air Aces*, 135.

CHAPTER 6

Planting the Seed: Colonel E.L.M. Burns, the Father of Canadian Airborne Forces?

Bernd Horn

The foundations of Canada's airborne forces are normally associated with the establishment of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion.[1] Rarely, if ever, does anyone question who was the catalyst or driving force behind the creation of Canada's original intrepid paratroopers who began the nation's proud airborne legacy. The short answer could be no one. Rather, it was an institutional reaction to the growing importance the British and Americans were placing on such forces. In fact, by the summer of 1942, most military strategists, as well as the public, defined a modern army as one that included airborne forces. Not to be left out of this new club, the Canadian senior military leadership quickly scrambled to ensure that they had the necessary components to demonstrate their modern capability and mind set.[2]

Clearly, this explanation, although accurate to a great degree, is too simplistic. It neglects to account for the dynamics of how organizations process information and ideas. It also fails to account for those visionary individuals who may plant a seed that fails to bloom quickly because of a lack of light and nutrients,

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Officers of the Canadian Corps of Guides, 1906. A young "soldier," Burns (centre row, fourth from left) proudly poses in his diminutive uniform and sword. He would later rise to prominence during the Second World War.

often associated with conservatism and hostility to new ideas. Nonetheless, these seeds still germinate and eventually provide the impetus or grounding from which great things can grow. In this vein, an argument can be made that Colonel, later Lieutenant-General, E.L.M. Burns was in fact the father of Canada's airborne forces.[3]

Burns was one of the rare generals who combined experience with both disciplined intellectual development and thought. Burns was once described as "the brain that marches like a soldier."[4] Although remembered more for his lack of command presence, cold personality and aloof manner, Burns' contribution to the Canadian Army was significant.[5] He represented an avant-garde philosophy that promoted progressive thought. He was a firm believer that "war is not a static science." He lectured consistently that it was "a dynamic art" and that "improvements in attack and defence succeed each other continuously." He explained that "unless we are constantly thinking how we can overcome the

enemy's latest technique, we will never win battles." Burns concluded that it was "the duty of all of us to think about these things, and contribute what we can."[6]

Eedson Louis Millard Burns was born in Westmount, Quebec in June 1897 and later educated at the exclusive Lower Canada College in Montreal. At 16, he enlisted in the militia. In 1914, Burns was accepted at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston. However, his formal studies were cut short and one year later, upon turning 18, he took a commission in the Canadian Engineers with the intention of actively joining the war effort. In 1916, Lieutenant Burns deployed overseas, eventually going to France as a signals officer in the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade, 4th Division, in August. Twice wounded in action, Burns received the Military Cross for his gallant actions in personally laying and repairing signal cable under heavy fire at the Somme.

Burns' wartime experience was key to his philosophical evolution in thinking about military operations. It ingrained in him a lasting memory of the "will-sapping effect of struggling through mud, living in mud, for days on end."[7] No one who struggled through it, he later recalled, would ever forget it. According to Burns, the mud and the effect of bad weather negated the ability to effectively execute offensive operations. Put simply, nothing could move. Surprise and decisiveness of action were nearly impossible to achieve. And so, Burns' wartime service entrenched in his thinking a belief in the necessity for mobility and speed as the key to modern warfare.

Initially, for Burns, this took the form of mechanization. During the inter-war years, he was a prolific writer and actively participated in the academic debate on mechanization and the character of modern war. Despite his progressive ideas, Burns never contemplated the employment of paratroopers or the use of airpower to transport infantry tactically.[8] He did, however, fully embrace the concept of "motor guerillas" that was expounded by the lead-

ing British military theorist at the time, Major-General J.F.C. Fuller. This idea, quite simply, called for the use of motorized forces to conduct raids deep into the enemy's rear lines to attack the antagonist's headquarters and lines of communication, which Fuller dubbed the "brains and nerves" of the opponent's army.[9] What is important here is Burns' early appreciation for "Deep Battle" and tactics that would emphasize mobility and speed, thus, offensive power. This would prove important to his later support of parachute troops.

He clearly realized the importance of mobility and speed to the offensive. Conceptually, he grasped the importance and utility of striking deep behind the enemy's lines to attack their command structures and lines of communication. The successful utilization of German paratroopers in April and May 1940 now revealed a viable tool to accomplish this aim. "The successes obtained by the Germans with air-borne troops," asserted Burns, "seem to show that this will become a regular method of warfare."[10]

Of equal significance to Burns in the formulation of his thinking on airborne forces was the subsequent parachute scare that erupted in the aftermath of the German aerial onslaught. The German *Fallschirmjäger*, by virtue of their stunning accomplishments, were quickly perceived by the military and general public as invincible. This created a wave of paranoia that infected the still-unoccupied territories in Europe, as well as the population in Britain.[11] As the remnants of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and the 1st Canadian Division hastily retreated to England, the threat of an imminent invasion was inescapable. "Invasion," conceded Burns in his memoirs, "seemed fearfully close in those days."[12] Inherent in that menace was the imminent spectre of German *Fallschirmjäger* descending from the clouds throughout England.

The perception of an airborne invasion even struck at the heart of the ever-fiery and optimistic British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, who estimated the expected scale of the airborne

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Paratroops entering an aircraft. Burns, the "intellectual soldier," was a strong advocate of airborne forces.

attack at approximately 30,000 paratroopers.[13] As a result, by November 1940, troop dispositions in England, in the order of 14 divisions, were tailored to counter the envisioned airborne invasion and vast amounts of scarce materials were invested in this aim.[14] Furthermore, the government adopted a policy to safeguard the country by ordering all open spaces (meaning virtually every park and playing field) all over Britain to be seeded with long spiked poles, concrete blocks and other obstacles which would impede paratroopers.[15]

Colonel Burns, as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in England, which was now tasked with the defence of the British Isles, was very conscious of the parachute menace. The role of the CEF was to guard precisely against it. Canada's overseas commander, Lieutenant-General A.G.L. McNaughton, stated "invasion was a real threat," and the Canadians were in essence, "a mobile reserve with a 360 degree front."[16]

This abject and bleak environment deeply influenced Colonel Burns when he returned to Canada in July 1940. Major-General H. Crerar, who himself was recalled to take over the position of Chief of the General Staff (CGS) in Ottawa, decided that he wanted the intellectually gifted Burns, whom he appointed Assistant Deputy CGS, with him at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ). Burns was now tasked with the organization and development of Canada's Army, in essence, to assist in its transformation into a modern force. An all-out effort now commenced. "With the fall of France," recounted Burns in his memoirs, "the limits which had been imposed by the previous cautious policy of Mr. Mackenzie King's government were set aside, and the question now was: how much could we do within the limits of Canada's manpower and political situation to build up and train and equip those formations needed for the task?"[17]

Colonel Burns wasted little time. With his entrenched belief in mobility and speed as critical components of offensive power, combined with his recent experience in Europe, he now set to the task of organizing Canada's Army for the new methods of warfare. Significantly, he saw airborne forces as an integral requirement. On 13 August 1940, he submitted his first proposal for the establishment of a Canadian airborne capability, in the form of a battalion of specially selected parachute troops, to Colonel J.C. Murchie, the Director of Military Operations in NDHQ. "We hope to turn to the offensive against Germany some day," emphasized Burns, "and it appears that full advantage must be taken of all forms of mobility in carrying out such operations."[18] It was not lost on Burns that the possession of airborne troops obliged the Germans to maintain much larger garrisons than they otherwise would because of the threat alone.

Predictably, Murchie dismissed the idea. "Although the value of the parachute troops in certain situations was very great," he replied, "the provision of such troops by Canada would be a project of doubtful value to the combined Empire war effort in view of the expenditure of time, money and equipment which

would be involved."[19] Colonel Murchie further explained that any Canadian parachute units, because of their unique nature and the numbers involved, would likely be part of a British parachute corps and, as a result, would be difficult to administer. More importantly, they would be largely out of Canadian control during operations. "If any additional commitments are accepted," he counselled, "these should be limited to the formation of units to which Canadians are particularly adapted by reason of the nature of this country."[20]

His objection was understandable to a point. First, the Canadian military, after decades of political and fiscal neglect, was struggling to modernize, a formidable task at the best of times, much less during a war in the face of a powerful enemy. Second, the issue of national command remained important for Canadians, and one for which Lieutenant-General McNaughton fought fiercely throughout his tenure as the overseas commander. "We had to keep the command in our own hands," he insisted, "otherwise we would have had a succession of people coming in and the order and counter-order would have been similar to what we'd been through on Salisbury Plain in 1914."[21] McNaughton recalled the struggle to claim national control over the CEF during the Great War. Those successful efforts transformed the CEF into a distinct national entity. Its achievements fuelled national pride and a sense of collective accomplishment. As a direct result, over time, the Canadian Corps became enshrined in the minds of Canadians. McNaughton was intent on applying that hard-earned lesson to the present conflict.[22]

The initial rejection failed to dissuade Colonel Burns. He quickly submitted a second memorandum to the CGS a mere six days later. This time, however, he wisely reverted to a venerable Canadian approach when discussing a suggested increase to the nation's military capability. He cloaked his proposal in the mantle of home defence. "In the defence of Canada against raids or a serious attempt at invasion," Burns argued, "they [paratroops] would be the quickest means of building up a front against an

attacker, and also could harass his communications." He further elaborated that:

> We have often thought of the problem of preventing an enemy from establishing a base for supplying submarines in remote sections of the coast which could not easily be reached by land. If we had even a battalion of Paratroops who could be landed to counter-attack such bases, it would make their establishment very much more difficult for an enemy; it would probably be necessary for him to send about a brigade of troops for land defences.

He went so far as to suggest that they "might also provide a highly mobile force for internal security duties." But in the end, his

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Airborne soldiers gathering their equipment in the drop zone.

true motives surfaced. "Above all," he revealed, "I would stress the moral advantage to our troops in knowing that we are preparing for all forms of offensive action."[23]

Tenaciously, two weeks later on 28 August 1940, he forwarded yet a third memorandum. "Parachute troops," he insisted, "are no longer just a stunt." He emphasized that all armies, including the Americans "are to have them." He explained that "airborne troops are merely the most mobile form of land forces, and the fact that some of them land by parachute is due to the characteristics of the aeroplane." Once again, he linked his scheme to a distinctly national orientation and theme in an attempt to win support. "Canada is often claimed to be a country essentially adapted to air transport – witness development of the Northland." Therefore, "training air-borne troops," he argued, "would be a development in line with the emphasis on air training generally." Again, he emphasized their ability to assist with internal security by being able to "reach centres of disaffection in remote areas very quickly." Similarly, Burns reiterated the psychological value of establishing an airborne capability. "To begin training parachute troops," he affirmed, "would be valuable in stimulating the morale, both of the service and the public. It would be a step towards a 'quality' army, and would show that we were actually doing something to create a force with offensive capabilities, and that the General staff had a modern outlook."[24] His attempt at appealing to the military and public perception was significant. The year 1940 was a low point in the Allied war effort. Defeats, retreats and withdrawals were the order of the day. Worse yet, England was bracing for invasion. Within this context, Burns recognized the importance of establishing and training a corps of aggressive and inherently offensive-minded paratroopers. He correctly surmised that this would provide a boost to public and military morale.

But Burns was quite alone in his thinking.[25] Although in philosophical terms the CGS appeared in concert with the utility of airborne forces, he was not prepared to take any concrete action. "It

is," Crerar responded, "not a project of importance to the winning of the war just now."[26] He directed that the matter be set aside and brought forward to his attention in three months time. On 12 November 1940, Colonel Burns diligently staffed yet another paper to the CGS. Although it was largely a cut-and-paste of his three earlier memorandums, the one key component that was central to understanding the airborne concept was once again stressed. "We hope to turn to the offensive against Germany some day," reiterated Burns, "and it appears that full advantage must be taken of all forms of mobility in carrying out operations." Unquestionably, to Burns, paratroopers represented mobility and offensive power. It also personified a modern army. As already observed, he argued passionately that airborne forces "would be a step towards a 'quality' army, and would show that we were actually doing something to create a force with offensive capabilities."[27]

The issue was adroitly sidestepped. Crerar had the idea forwarded to Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in England to ascertain the views of both the War Office (WO) and McNaughton. The WO promptly reported that parachute troops were in fact being organized and that one "special service battalion" was undergoing active training. The British concept of employment was explained as filling the role of light cavalry to "seize bridge crossings, defiles and aerodromes well in advance of the slower-moving main body of the army."[28]

In essence, at this early stage of development, particularly in light of the internal resistance to the idea of airborne forces, neither the British nor the Americans had fully appreciated the potential of paratroopers. At this juncture, the role of airborne forces was still largely limited to raids of three types: first, a raid on a selected position to be followed by the evacuation of the raiding force by air; second, a raid to be followed by evacuation by sea; and finally, the dropping of parachutists simply as saboteurs.[29] Critics, particularly in the Air Ministry, continued to argue that "dropping troops from the air by parachute is a clumsy and obsolescent method" and that the German use of paratroopers in the

Low Countries "may be the last time that parachute troops are used on a serious scale in major operations."[30]

Of note was the impression left by Lieutenant-General McNaughton in response to the CGS's query. "It is understood," wrote one of his staff officers, "that General McNaughton favours the idea that Canada should commence the organization and training of both parachute and glider-borne troops, and that one battalion should be raised in the first instance, later perhaps, expanding to one brigade."[31] However, Major-General Crerar was of a different mind. During a meeting on 20 December 1940 at CMHQ in London, England, he proclaimed that he was "agreeable to a proportion (say a platoon) in each infantry battalion being trained in this work [parachuting], [but] he is not in favour of training special airborne units unless the War Office make specific requests for them, which is unlikely."[32] McNaughton, although stating that "the use of air-borne troops has distinct possibilities," quickly acquiesced to the views of the CGS and was not prepared to press his views.[33] As a consequence, no further action was undertaken. In the end, not even a "proportion" of infantry, as Crerar indicated he would be agreeable to, were trained as paratroopers.

Colonel Burns' efforts were noteworthy, yet as history has shown, largely futile. Despite his rationalization of airborne forces in a home defence/security role, or as the harbinger of a modern offensive army, his prescience was lost on his military superiors. They failed to see the importance or relevance of such forces, particularly in the Canadian context.[34] In all fairness, they were also preoccupied with creating a mechanized army from scratch. And so, by late-1940, the concept of an airborne force slipped into obscurity. It was not until the early part of August 1941, after Colonel Burns had been promoted and sent overseas, that the idea resurfaced in the faceless tomb of NDHQ. But the re-emergence of the debate was not the result of in-depth analysis or a change in direction by the Canadian military leadership. Rather, it was inevitably linked to an Allied change of heart.

The startling success of the German *Fallschirmjäger* in their conquest of the Mediterranean island of Crete in May 1941 prompted the British to adopt a more ambitious programme for airborne forces. This was driven by Prime Minister Churchill himself. "This is a sad story," he lamented in the aftermath of the invasion, "and I feel myself greatly to blame for allowing myself to be overborne by the resistances which were offered." He concluded that "we are always found behind-hand by the enemy."[35] But this was to change. On 27 May 1941, Churchill declared, "We ought to have 5,000 parachutists and an Air-borne Division on the German model, with any improvements which might suggest themselves from experience." This time he was not to be deterred. "A whole year has been lost," he warned, "and I now invite the Chiefs of the Staff to make proposals for trying, so far as is possible, to repair the misfortune."[36]

Four days later, the British General and Air Staffs agreed to press forward as quickly as possible with the airborne programme. A brigade of 2,500 fully-trained parachutists was to be formed by 1 July 1941. Even before this was achieved, Army staff began to plan for a division-sized organization.[37] "I am convinced," wrote the Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), "that an Airborne Division...is a necessary component of any major military force."[38] Not surprisingly, they authorized the establishment of an airborne division as early as November 1941.

The Americans also rapidly advanced their airborne programme. By June 1942, the 82nd Motorized Infantry Division had been transformed into the 82nd Airborne Division.[39] Furthermore, their strategy book for 1942 reflected the change in doctrine and philosophy.[40] It clearly stated that paratroopers were a critical component of a modern army and essential for a successful invasion of Europe.

And so, Canada's military commanders found themselves left out.[41] Although unmoved by Burns' earlier vision and astute arguments, they now felt compelled to act. Canada prided itself on its contribution to the war effort and its military commanders desired to remain a member of the club. If that meant paratroop-

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Brigadier E.L.M. Burns (right) with Major-Generals F.F. Worthington (left) and H.F.G. Letson (centre).

ers, so be it. As a result, on 1 July 1942, Cabinet approved the formation of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion.[42] With that decision commenced Canada's proud airborne legacy.[43]

Colonel Burns was clearly ahead of his time. Despite his compelling arguments in 1940, he was consistently turned down in his efforts to establish a parachute force. Almost two years later, another dramatic and successful German airborne operation created an Allied change of heart. This, in turn, created the necessary momentum that finally led to Burns' vision being realized. Nonetheless, Burns' persistent exertions to establish a Canadian airborne capability arguably earn him the title of "father" of Canada's airborne forces.

Endnotes

1 For a complete history of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, see Bernd Horn and Michel Wycyznski, *Paras Versus the Reich. Canada's Paratroopers at War, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2003) and Bernd Horn and Michel Wycyznski, *Tip of the Spear - An Intimate Portrait of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2002).

2 See Bernd Horn, *Bastard Sons: A Critical Examination of the Canadian Airborne Experience, 1942-1995* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), Chapter 1, and, Bernd Horn, "A Question of Relevance: The Establishment of a Canadian Parachute Capability, 1942-1945," *Canadian Military History*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Autumn 1999), 27-38.

3 For a wider biographical look at E.L.M. Burns, see J.L. Granatstein, *The Generals: The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), and, Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski, "General E.L.M. Burns – Canada's Intellectual General," in Bernd Horn and S.J. Harris, eds., *Warrior Chiefs – Perspectives on Senior Canadian Military Commanders* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2001), 143-163.

4 N. Gregor Guthrie, "Meet 'Tommy' Burns – A Soldier's Soldier," file Veterans Affairs – MGen Burns, Vol. 1, E.L.M. Burns fonds, Manuscript Group 31-G6, *Library and Archives Canada* [*LAC*].

5 See Granatstein, *The Generals*, 116-117.

6 "Notes for Lecture Delivered to Offrs of CACRUs at Blackdown, 29 Dec 43," file Articles, Papers, Speeches, Vol. 9, E.L.M. Burns fonds, *LAC*.

7 Lieutenant-General E.L.M. Burns, *General Mud: Memoirs of Two World Wars* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd., 1970), 18 and 25.

8 Burns published the "Mechanization of Cavalry" as early as 1923 in the *Canadian Defence Quarterly* [*CDQ*], Vol. 1, No. 3 (1923-1924), 37.

9 Major E.L.M. Burns, "Prize Essay - Protection of the Rearward Services and Headquarters in Modern War," *CDQ*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (April 1933), 295-313. Burns' notion of "motor-guerillas" raiding enemy rear areas was an extension of Fuller's concept born from his observations during the German "Michael Offensive" of 21 March 1918. The German penetration severed the command and control and logistics between the Allied rear and the front line. This in turn created a state of paralysis in the Allied armies. From this experience, Fuller developed the belief that the key was to employ mobility as a psychological weapon to paralyse not only an enemy's command, but also his government. See J.F.C. Fuller, *Conduct of War* (London: Eyre & Spottis Woode, 1961), 256-257; A.J. Trythall, *Boney*

Fuller: The Intellectual General 1878-1966 (London: Cassell, 1977), 60; and, Brian Holden Reid, *J.F.C. Fuller-Military Thinker* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), 49-51.

10 Memorandum, Burns to CGS, 13 August 1940, file 112.1 (D32): Airborne Troops, Cdn 1940, Department of National Defence [DND], *Directorate of History and Heritage* [*DHH*], and, Memorandum, Burns to CGS, 12 November 1940, 1, file 1 Para Tps/1, Vol. 12260, CMHQ, Record Group [RG] 24, *LAC*.

11 A General HQ (GHQ) memorandum reported, "There were constant rumours and alarms during operations with regard to parachute troops and fifth column activities. It is essential that means to deal with this menace be thought out in detail...to compete with this menace and to restore public confidence. An efficient 'parashot' organisation is of high importance since it is essential to maintain mobile reserves to deal with the situation in case of enemy break throughs." GHQ Home Forces, "Notes on the Operations in Flanders and Belgium 10th to 31st May with Particular Reference to the Present Problem of Home Defence," 28 June 1940, file 146.141009 (D2), *DHH*. See also, G.G. Norton, *The Red Devils* (Hampshire: Leo Cooper, 1971), 254, and, Philip Warner, *The Special Forces of World War II* (London: Granada, 1985), 8.

12 Burns, *General Mud*, 100-101.

13 Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Their Finest Hour* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 285.

14 "Central Landing Establishment Memorandum. Provision of an Airborne Force, Nov 1st 1940," Air Ministry: Army Cooperation Command: Registered Files. Airborne Forces History, June 1940-1944, AIR 39/132, *Public Records Office* [*PRO*].

15 Norton, *The Red Devils*, 254, and, Warner, *The Special Forces*, 8. To assist in training personnel in countering enemy airborne operations, the British Army promulgated *Airborne Troops - Military Training Pamphlet*, No. 50, Part I - Defence Against Airborne Troops, 1941.

16 John Swettenham, *McNaughton*, Vol. 2 (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1969), 117-119.

17 Burns, *General Mud,* 102.

18 Ibid.

19 Major D.H. Cunningham, "Further Material Relating to the Organization and Training of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion," Appendix A to Historical Section CMHQ Report 138, 5 December 1949, 1; CMHQ Report 138, 7 July 1945; and, file Hist 1B, all *DHH*.

20 Ibid.

21 Swettenham, *McNaughton*, 30.

22 C.P. Stacey, *Six Years of War. The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific*, Vol. 1 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), 212-221.

23 Memorandum, Burns to CGS, 19 August 1940, file 112.1 (D32): Airborne Troops, Cdn 1940, *DHH*.

24 Memorandum, Burns to CGS, 28 August 1940, Ibid.

25 Actually, there was some support. Despite the Army's perfunctory rejection, some continued interest in the Canadian Forces lingered. Surprisingly, it was driven by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). In October 1941, the RCAF began to press NDHQ in Ottawa in regard to the policy being considered in respect to the establishment of parachute troops. Furthermore, the Air Force staff officers relayed an offer from the Royal Air Force (RAF) to provide instructors and equipment to assist the Army in the event they wished to proceed with training airborne forces. As no definitive answer was forthcoming, the RCAF continued to forward a stream of messages requesting an update on the Army's "airborne" policy. This bothersome attention prompted Major-General Maurice Pope, the Vice Chief of the General Staff (VCGS), to direct in January 1942 that the effort be indefinitely deferred because the home army provided no scope for the employment of parachute troops. Nonetheless, their interest, no doubt prompted by the ability to increase their aircraft requirements, ensured the issue was still kept alive. See Telegram GS No. 2403, Canmilitry to Defensor, 3 November 1941, file 1 Para Tps/1, Vol. 12260, CMHQ, RG 24, *LAC*. See the given volume for a series of messages and memorandums asking for updates on the Army's policy on airborne forces. Interestingly, one series of reply correspondence was lost because the ship that they were on was sunk by enemy submarines. The RCAF insistence is paradoxical. The paradox lies in the fact that the Air Ministry in England attempted to thwart the Army's expansion of airborne forces at every turn. For them, any increase in paratroopers or gliders meant the diversion of pilots and aircraft away from the strategic bombing program. Air Marshal Harris believed the crux of the matter was "whether Bomber Command was to continue its offensive action by bombing Germany or whether it was to be turned into a training and transport command for carrying about a few thousand airborne troops to some undetermined destination for some vague purpose." See D.F. Butler, "The Airborne Forces, 1940-1943," 6-9, CAB 101/220, *PRO*.

26 Major D.H. Cunningham, "Further Material Relating to the Organization and Training of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion," Appendix A to Historical Section CMHQ Report 138, 5 December 1949, 2; CMHQ Report 138, 7 July 1945; and, file Hist 1B, all *DHH*.

27 Memorandum, Burns to CGS, 12 November 1940, 1, file 1 Para Tps/1, Vol. 12260, CMHQ, RG 24, *LAC*.

28 Message (G.S. 3140) Crerar, CGS, to HQ Cdn Corps, 16 December 1940, Ibid., and, CMHQ Report 138, 7 July 1945, 1.

29 "Minutes of a Meeting held at the Air Ministry at 3.30 p.m. on September 5th, 1940, to discuss the provision of Airborne Forces," Air Ministry and Minister of Defence: Operations Record Book, Miscellaneous Units, No. 1 Parachute Training School Ringway, Previous Parachute Training Squadron, Training Units, AIR 29/520, *PRO*. See also, Lieutenant-Colonel T.B.H. Otway, *Airborne Forces* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1990, reprint), 22. See also, message, Canmilitry to Defensor, no date, file 112.1 (D32): Airborne Troops Cdn 1940, *DHH*.

30 "Air Staff Note - Present Situation in Respect of the Development of Parachute Training," September 1940, PREMIER 3/32/1, *PRO*, and, "Churchill at War. The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-45," unit 1, reel 12, University Publications of America, Bethesda, Maryland.

31 Memorandum by Brigadier M.A. Pope, CMHQ, 6 December 1940, file 112.1 (D32): Airborne Troops Cdn 1940, *DHH*, and, Memormandum, CMHQ, 6 December 1940, 2, file 1 Para Tps /1, CMHQ, Vol. 12260, RG 24, *LAC*.

32 "Historical Notes 1942-1945, First Canadian Parachute Battalion," 1, file 145.4013 (D1), *DHH*, and, "Historical Reports 1 Cdn Para Bn, 1942-1945," Document A 87.002.61, 1, *Canadian Airborne Forces Museum* [*CAFM*], and, CMHQ Report 138, 1-2.

33 "Extract from Meeting held at CMHQ London, at 1015 hrs, 20 Dec 40," file 112.1 (D32): Airborne Troops Cdn 1940, *DHH*.

34 Army commanders continually believed that the home army provided no scope for the employment of parachute troops. An Appreciation on Air Landing Troops conducted in January 1942 reinforced their view. "Parachute troops," it clearly explained, "will not be considered except in passing. Our operations at home are largely static (coast defence), and, as a consequence, do not provide scope for the employment of parachute troops." See General Staff, "Appreciation Re Air Landing Troops," 24 January 1942, file 112.3M2 (D232), *DHH*. See also, endnote 2 to this chapter.

35 Prime Minister Personal Minute Serial No. D 169/1 to General Ismay for C.O.S. Committee, 27 May 1941, PREMIER 3/32/1, *PRO*, and, "Churchill at War. The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-45," unit 1, reel 12.

36 Ibid.

37 D.F. Butler, "The Airborne Forces, 1940-1943," 6-9, War Cabinet and Cabinet Officer: Historical Section: War Histories (Second World War), Military, CAB 101/220, *PRO*. See also, "Minute - War Office to Air

Ministry, 27 August 1941," Air Ministry: Army Cooperation Command: Registered Files. Airborne Forces Policy, December 1940-1941, AIR 39/38, *PRO*. See also, "War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee - Training of Parachutists," 13 May 1942, CAB 120/262, *PRO*. See finally, Message (G.S. 0493), Crerar, CGS, to HQ Cdn Corps, 15 August 1941, file 1 Para Tps /1, Vol. 12260, CMHQ, RG 24, *LAC*.

38 "The Value of Airborne Forces," Memorandum by CIGS, 11 January 1943, "Churchill at War. The Prime Minister's Office Papers, 1940-45," unit 1, reel 12.

39 William B. Breuer, *Geronimo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 9, and, Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 54.

40 U.S. War Department Operations Division, General Staff, Strategy Book, November 1942, 212-213 & 219, file OPD Strategy Book, November 1942, exec 1, item 10A, box 2, entry 422, RG 165, *National Archives*, Washington D.C. Sourced from the Joint Military Intelligence College, Washington, D.C.

41 This was self-imposed. Despite the renewed effort in the British camp, initially, the Canadian non-interest remained prevalent. Notwithstanding the dramatic seizure of Crete and Churchill's fear that Cyprus and Syria would be next, the Canadian commanders still failed to see any reason for raising specialized troops who were perceived as lacking a credible role in the Canadian context. Nonetheless, the British flurry of activity did prompt queries from the CGS. But, the latent enmity towards going down the airborne path was clearly evident in McNaughton, the Canadian overseas commander. Although he left an impression at a meeting in December 1940 that he supported the idea of airborne forces, he now showed his true colours. In response to the latest Canadian query on what the WO was doing in regard to paratroopers, he bluntly declared, "I do not advocate the establishment of any separate parachute troops in the Canadian Forces." He explained that he had watched "with interest the organization here [in England] of such special units as Commandos, Ski Battalions and Para Tps." The cycle was always the same he insisted. "Initial enthusiasm very high," he wrote, "and draws good officers and men from regular units distracting and unsettling others and upsetting the unit's organization." However, he concluded, "with prolonged period awaiting appropriate opportunity for employment enthusiasm evaporates [and] officers and men ask [for] re-transfer and return to former units disappointed." In McNaughton's view, there were only two reasons that justified the creation of a special airborne force. The first was the probabil-

ity of early and continued employment in a special role and the second was the need for specialized training on lines greatly different from regular units. In the end, nothing was done to establish paratroopers in the Canadian Army. See Message (G.S. 0493), Defensor to Canmilitry, 15 August 1941; Message (G.S. 1647), Canmilitry to Defensor, 19 August 1941; Message (G.S. 1647), Canmilitry to Defensor, 19 August 1941; Letter, Brigadier G.G. Simonds, BGS Cdn Corps to CMHQ, "Paratroop Training," 30 October 1941, all file 1 Para Tps /1, Vol. 12260, RG 24, CMHQ, *LAC*, and, CMHQ Report 138, 2.

42 *Minutes of the War Committee of the Cabinet*, Vol. 7-11, 1942, Reel 3, 1 July 1942.

43 For a complete history of Canada's airborne legacy, see Bernd Horn and Michel Wycyznski, *Canadian Airborne Forces since 1942* (London: Osprey, 2006); Bernd Horn and Michel Wycyznski, *"Hook-Up!" The Canadian Airborne Compendium: A Summary of Major Canadian Airborne Activities, Exercises And Operations, 1940-2000* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2003); and, Bernd Horn and Michel Wycyznski, *In Search of Pegasus - The Canadian Airborne Experience, 1942 - 1999* (St Catharines: Vanwell, 2000).

CHAPTER 7

After Medak: Opportunities Seized and Myths Dispelled - The Leadership of Colonel George Oehring In Sector South

Roy Thomas

The Medak battle of September 1993, between the Canadians of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2 PPCLI), and the Croatian Army, is no longer an overlooked aspect of Canada's military history.[1] Nonetheless, still in the shadows is the fact that within days of the end of the last firefight, 2 PPCLI was replaced by the First Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment (1 R22eR).[2] However, it was not just the battle group that changed in the Krajina immediately after the Medak fight! Indeed, before Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Calvin's battle group re-deployed to Canada, the French general who commanded the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) personnel in the United Nations Protected Area (UNPA) in Sector South, where the Medak battle occurred, had already been replaced by a Canadian "gunner," Colonel George Oehring. His leadership in Sector South deserves more attention than it has so far received.

The firing had scarcely ceased between UNPROFOR troops and one of the belligerents, namely the Croatians, when Colonel Oehring assumed command. He handed over command eight months later with a cease-fire in place that endured for a further

two years after his departure. If saving the lives of the local inhabitants was the main mission of UNPROFOR, then Colonel Oehring's command was unquestionably successful.

Sector South is an example of success during a period when UNPROFOR and the United Nations (UN) were criticized for a lack of progress in the Balkans. Moreover, this accomplishment was extended to all the UNPAs in Croatia. In addition, the so-called traditional peacekeeping approach of separating belligerents, thought to be passé, was in fact employed in contrast to what was happening in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Colonel Oehring's tenure in Sector South also provides an example of successful operational-level conduct of military effort in a peace support operation setting, contrary to what some pundits have suggested is possible.[3] Staff Colleges should take note! His leadership in the challenging circumstances after the Medak battle goes a long way to refute any suggestion that officers trained to lead in war cannot adapt to the nuances of Operations Other Than War (OOTW).[4]

Personal photograph, Colonel (ret'd) George Oehring

Putting his personality to use. Colonel George Oehring (second from right) meeting with Brigadier Ante Gotovina of the Croatian Army (second from left).

Colonel Oehring demonstrated a "flexibility"[5] that has characterized great leaders throughout history. He not only adopted tactics to serve his "centre of gravity," but he also made restrictive Rules of Engagement (ROE), the bane of military commanders in peace support operations, serve a long-term strategic purpose, as well as save lives in the immediate present. He displayed the special courage that is required of leaders in the world today.[6]

Introduction: Command of Sector South in Context

Oehring's actual appointment as sector commander was a matter of luck, not good judgment, on the part of Canadian authorities in Canada. He came to assume command as a stopgap measure from a French general who, at best, was short-toured, or at worst, fired. The Czechoslovakian major-general who was to replace the French commander was not available on such short notice. Colonel Oehring, who arrived in the Former Yugoslavia to be deputy commander of the relatively benign Sector West,[7] suddenly found himself taking over the hottest sector in UNPROFOR at a time when his fellow Canadians had just finished fighting a battle (and earning 2 PPCLI a citation) with one of the warring parties. And then they left! The Canadian colonel stayed to command and lead the three, later increased to four, UNPROFOR battalions of Sector South. He made saving the lives of the "locals" his centre of gravity.[8] However, his success as sector commander was over-shadowed by events facing the Canadian Forces (CF) in the 1993/1994 timeframe. The circumstances surrounding Canada's contribution to the American-led intervention in Somalia, specifically the questionable killings of Somali nationals and the torture-murder of a Somali teenager, meant that the media coverage was focused elsewhere than on Sector South.

Adding to the drama in Africa was the fact that when the conflict in Yugoslavia did grab television sound bites, it usually featured the more accessible Sarajevo, with the Holiday Inn backdrop so often favoured by news anchors. The almost continuous Sarajevo air bridge, coupled with the competition among "players" for

publicity, also helped make the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina the “place to be” for newsmakers and those who put them in the forefront. Moreover, for the American media, Sarajevo was the place where the United States had won Olympic gold less than a decade before! Knin, capital of the unrecognized Serbian Krajina entity, where Colonel Oehring had his headquarters, had literally no name recognition with most media personages and certainly no equivalent to the Holiday Inn or “Sniper Alley.” Oehring could not employ the media as a resource to put his case, and that of his troops, before the international community.[9] To put his command in perspective, Colonel Oehring commanded 2,007 soldiers, later increased to 3,821, 89 UN Military Observers (UNMOs) and 128 UN Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL), all of which was more than his Canadian gunner-peer, Brigadier-General Romeo Dallaire, commanded during his tenure as Commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) during the same 1993/1994 time-frame.[10]

Brigadier-General (soon to be promoted) Dallaire arrived to command a UN force that was to oversee a peace accord signed in Luska. Dallaire’s story is well-known.[11] Colonel Oehring arrived in the mission area where an existing agreement signed at Erdut had been flagrantly disregarded by the Croatian Army which had employed tanks, artillery and even aircraft to invade a so-called UNPA. Atrocities, although not anywhere on the scale of Rwanda, had been committed.

Yet, before Colonel Oehring, still in the same rank, turned over command of Sector South to Major-General Kotil, his Area of Responsibility (AOR) had weathered yet another Croatian Army incursion on Trlo Ridge and was able to report belligerent compliance with the overall cease-fire arrangement negotiated in Zagreb.[12] It is somewhat ironic that the UN should have been exchanging bullets in order to stop a frontier violation from the direction of Zagreb/Vienna. The Serbs that the Croats sought to cleanse from within the boundaries of their newly recognized state had in fact been brought there by the Austro-Hungarian

Photographer Sergeant R. Thompson, CFJIC, ISC93-5147-23

Destruction on the border of the Serbian Krajina.

Empire to establish military settlements in order to deter Turkish incursions from the other direction. The Krajina Serb presence was part of an earlier protection plan.[13]

The Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875 and the waning strength of the Ottoman Empire had made the Serb military settlements irrelevant as blocks to expansion from the East for the last century, if not more. The rise of Serb nationalism, not to mention two world wars, had made the former Serb defenders very undesirable to some elements of the Croatian population. Serbs had fought Croat units of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the First World War and efforts to eliminate Serbs had been undertaken by the infamous Ustache units of the Fascist regime of "Croatia" during the Second World War.

With some justification, the Croatian Serbs in Croatia demanded the same autonomy from the fledgling state of Croatia as the Croatians themselves had demanded from the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. A self-proclaimed but unrecognized "Serb Republic of the Krajina" (RSK) was created. However, this entity had

Croatian inhabitants and more important, in the eyes of the international community, existed within the frontiers of the sovereign state of Croatia. Moreover, the so-called RSK was backed geographically against another new state, that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, itself in the throes of a savage civil war, which in September 1993, included three belligerent parties, Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croatians and the Bosnian government, primarily Muslims.[14] The degree to which the former President of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, orchestrated the numerous Balkan conflicts has been examined by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.[15] Other external players in what might arguably be called the Croatian War to create a "Serb-free" national entity no doubt were the United States, Germany and even Canada.[16]

If some of the external factors contributed to the willingness of the belligerents in Sector South to stop shelling and snipe at UN troops and inhabitants, then Colonel Oehring can indeed be said to have taken advantage of those strategic factors that favoured his success in obtaining cease-fires. These stoppages in the shoot-

Personal photograph, Colonel (ret'd) George Oehring

In the Medak Pocket, September 1993. Oehring (left) visits Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Calvin, Commanding Officer CANBAT I (facing camera) with Brigadier Baudot, outgoing commander Sector South (back to camera).

ing within the sector are examples of seizing opportunities. George Oehring stepped into a complex historic battleground that had more than just the "Ghosts of Medak" lingering.

Success in Stopping the Shelling: Opportunities Seized

Less than six weeks after the Medak battle, Oehring had orchestrated the so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement" between the Croats and the Croatian Serbs in Sector South. Taking advantage of the importance of All Saints' Day in November, on both the Roman Catholic and Orthodox religious calendars, Oehring conducted a series of negotiations with the most senior field commanders, thus departing from the practice of his predecessor who had limited most of his contacts to the Krajina Serb's nominal senior military commander based in Knin. Indeed, he had started making contact with the leaders of belligerents and partners in the peace process even before Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Calvin and his battalion had rotated home. Oehring explains that his approach to negotiations followed a step-by-step process, tactical negotiations so to speak, to achieve an operational objective, in this case a sector-wide cease-fire centered on a day considered "holy" by both sides.[17] The term "Gentlemen's Agreement" derived from the fact that the Serb field commander did not sign, but rather gave his word.

The origins of this wider "All Saints" cease-fire are found in the winery at Benkovac, which escaped the damage meted out to so many other seemingly less significant structures. The Gentlemen's Agreement certainly did enable the local populations to harvest the grapes needed to produce the wines of the region. Indeed, the cease-fire did more than merely help the inhabitants economically, it also eased the tensions generated by the Medak Pocket atrocities, another of Oehring's tactical aims.

Operationally, this break in the daily exchange of artillery and small arms fire laid the groundwork for subsequent cease-fires and the eventual achievement of the UNPROFOR operational objective of separating the belligerents on the ground. A day without dan-

ger was desirable and became more so once experienced! Coming so soon after Medak, the achievement of such a goal, and by a Canadian commander, given Croatian casualties, is more than just a noteworthy accomplishment. It is a textbook example of seizing the opportunity presented by a common feast day and a key shared economic venture to craft a stop to hostilities.

The re-opening of the Pakovo Selo crossing is another indication of how Colonel Oehring seized opportunities to further his operational goals. Good commanders throughout the ages have taken advantage of weather to further their objectives. This Canadian colonel was just following in the footsteps of some of these great leaders. The snow of December 1993 blocked routes that carried the food needed by not only the UN contingents, but also by the local inhabitants of Sector South. It soon became a logistical nightmare for those involved. Soldiers could eat emergency rations, but Croatian Serbs had meagre reserves of foodstuffs. This intervention of nature was used by Colonel Oehring to open a third crossing in the southern part of Sector South, one that saved time and distance in connecting his command with the expanding UN logistic base at the Croatian port of Split.

The Croatian Serbs, in particular the nominal military commander of the Krajina Serb military forces, had refused to countenance another crossing in addition to those already in place at Medak and Miranj. However, when the titular head of the Serbian Krajina Republic met Colonel Oehring at a Knin meeting to discuss co-operation of UNPROFOR with Serb authorities to open roads, the Canadian colonel made opening Pakovo Selo a condition of providing UN fuel for Croatian Serb snowplows. As a result, this crossing was functioning about the same time that the routes were cleared. The beneficiaries were not only UN personnel and expatriates, but also the local Croatian Serbs.

However, the local Serbs were not the only Sector South inhabitants to be served by Colonel Oehring's negotiations. The Maslenicia Bridge was a "running sore" in Croat/Krajina Serb

relations, predating the Medak pocket action. Early in the conflict, the Krajina Serbs had captured this key connection to the million or more Croatians in the Dalmatia and had subsequently destroyed it, forcing Croatian vehicle traffic to take ferries via the island of Pag. The Croatian forces had re-captured the Maslenicia Bridge area in their January 1993 offensive.[18] They then put in a pontoon bridge which could be taken under direct fire by Croatian Serb tanks and was routinely subjected to much more than harassment fire by Croatian Serb artillery. The Croatian Serbs claimed that the pontoon replacement for the Maslenicia Bridge was being used for military traffic, although the UNMO overlooking the site saw mainly civilian traffic.[19] A glance at the map indicates the military value of the Maslenicia Bridge to the Croatian forces.[20] Colonel Oehring's negotiations, coupled with his other discussions, led to the UNMO's assessment that Maslenicia was no longer a "hotspot," making tours on the observation post ones without incident.[21] The Croatians benefited from the increased truck traffic. It had been an early Christmas present of sorts for the inhabitants on the Croatian side of the lines in Sector South.

Throughout UNPROFOR's Croatian AOR, a Christmas 1993 cease-fire had been negotiated.[22] Achievement of UNPROFOR's operational goal, namely a Christmas cease-fire in the UNPAs, so soon after the discovery of Croatian Medak atrocities in September, was undoubtedly due to Colonel Oehring's tactical successes: the All Saints' Day cease-fire; co-operation with snow removal; opening the Pakovo Selo crossing; and ending the shelling of the Maslenicia Bridge area. However, when the move towards a more permanent cease-fire was threatened in Sector South in early-spring, Oehring's well-established tactic of negotiation saved the operational intentions of UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb.

Some time during the night of 4 March, a Croatian Army patrol became trapped in an area occupied by the Croatian Serb Army on a strategic piece of ground that came to be identified as "Trlo Ridge." This tectonic upheaval of limestone rises to 1,200 feet and

is honeycombed with natural caves that offer sanctuary to intruders or occupiers alike. The Croatian Army had a communications tower on this feature and it was but 20 kilometres from the scene of the September Medak battles, the so-called municipal capital of Gospic and the town of Licki Osik where the Croatian Serb Army still benefited from the output of a munitions factory.

Colonel Oehring became aware of what had become a standoff on Trlo Ridge between military forces of the two belligerents through Croatian shelling of Licki Osik, the Croatian Serb shelling of Gospic and mounting civilian casualties on both sides on the morning of 5 March. Recognizing that unarmed civilians, under his UN mandate, were his centre of gravity, Colonel Oehring immediately started the process to engage the two opposing local commanders in negotiations to end the artillery fire and the firefights. Meetings with the local Croat and Croatian Serb commanders followed on 6 March with the outcome that a "face-to-face" meeting of these two was arranged under the protection of the Canadian battalion on 7 March at the Medak crossing. Both sides agreed to stop shelling until after this meeting, bringing a respite for civilians of both belligerent parties. Colonel Oehring could have waited for Zagreb, but instead used his initiative and acted immediately.[23]

Over a period of four days, Colonel Oehring met with one or the other of the opposing corps commanders twelve times. In addition, he arranged and participated in two face-to-face sessions. This also involved 3,000 kilometres of driving over roads that varied from those that were influenced by the Mediterranean climate to those still winter-bound by semi-Alpine weather. These negotiations did not end tactical actions between the small forces engaged on Trlo Ridge itself, but they did stop the shelling of towns and villages that had killed or maimed civilians. Additionally, threatened reinforcement of belligerent forces at the point of contact did not take place.[24] Oehring's prompt actions enabled the slower moving processes at work in the Croatian capital of Zagreb to move forward.

Some pundits have suggested that there was a desire on the part of politicians in Zagreb, and even Belgrade, for a temporary respite in the Croatian conflict so other more pressing campaigns could be mounted.[25] It was about this time that the Bosnian Croats were moving to a rapprochement with the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs were preparing to assault Gorazde. UNPROFOR headquarters had been working on a cease-fire for and on separating the belligerents in the organization's AORs in Croatia. Escalation of the Trlo Ridge situation into a larger confrontation seriously threatened these talks.[26]

However, the first Zagreb presence in Sector South came in the form of a Croatian "major" from the Croatian Army headquarters in the capital; he attended Colonel Oehring's meeting with both local corps commanders at the Medak crossing site on 10 March. On returning to his headquarters in Knin, the Canadian sector commander found that a UN diplomat of ambassador rank had come by helicopter from Zagreb to meet with the so-called prime minister of the RSK, to be accompanied by Colonel Oehring as well. By the time that the Secretary General's Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi, came to visit on 18 March, it was evident that "higher" authorities on both sides of the line, which the UN hoped to make a "Zone of Disengagement,"[27] were moving towards a larger accord of which Trlo Ridge was but a smaller piece.

Unlike the Medak incident in September, UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb did not send an officer to undertake the negotiations directly, as had been the case in September 1993 with the dispatch of Colonel Michel Maisonneuve from General Cot's staff. Rather, a procession of UNPROFOR senior-ranking officers came to Colonel Oehring's headquarters and waited for him to return from his negotiations in the field so as to build on his first steps in stopping the shells.

On 29 March 1994, in Zagreb, the internationally recognized Croatian government and what the UN termed as "local Serb authorities"[28] in the UNPAs concluded a cease-fire agreement that did in

fact create the buffer zone found in the so-called "traditional peace-keeping missions."[29] Colonel Oehring's suggested terminology may have helped negotiations, but there can be no doubt that without his four days of hectic shuttle diplomacy and arranging the first face-to-face meetings of the two commanders since the conflict began, the UNPROFOR intent to put in place a disengagement plan would have been seriously threatened by the presence of Croatian Army personnel, surrounded by the Croatian Serb military, on Trlo Ridge.[30] In essence, he salvaged UNPROFOR's operational intentions!

More to the point, although fruitless from the perspective of the surrounded Croatian patrol, Oehring did achieve what so often did not occur elsewhere, a cessation of shelling that caused many civilian casualties. Talking, creating the opportunity for talking, and listening, became an unlikely but very necessary tactic in securing one of UNPROFOR's military objectives in Sector South, protection of the inhabitants. Trlo Ridge demonstrated Colonel Oehring's mastery of this tactic when a firefight threatened to escalate into something more.

Creating and Using the Tools for Success

Negotiation was not a subject taught at Canada's institutions for training officers during the Cold War. At many points on the spectrum of peace support operations, tactical and operational success, such as that gained through the Gentlemen's Agreement, is not possible without negotiations. Colonel Oehring very early demonstrated an ability to make the personal connections with field commanders and earn the respect and trust required to make tangible achievements possible. Negotiation skills were to some extent a unique personal tool that enabled success. Colonel Oehring added to the impact of his own personality by ensuring that key leaders from his partners in the peace process, such as the head of the UNCIVPOL, accompanied him.[31]

As commanders such as Field-Marshal Slim have done, Colonel Oehring, on assuming command, put in place a headquarters that

worked for him.[32] Inheriting a dysfunctional headquarters split into national cells with limited unity of purpose, he created an effective command and coordination tool from not only among the many nationalities who formed his staff, but also from the agencies who complemented the UN military efforts, such as the UNMOs, the UNCIVPOL, UN humanitarian agencies such as the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).[33] Creating a functioning headquarters very early in his command tenure that served him, not the goals of participating nations or other organizations, enabled Colonel Oehring to spend the time to develop the relationships needed to make his negotiations a success.[34]

The need for a functioning headquarters is well understood by any former artillery regimental commander who knows he must be forward with his supported commander, leaving the operation of his headquarters to subordinates. In this, Colonel Oehring no doubt benefited from his previous command of the First Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (1 RCHA) with Canada's mechanized brigade group in Germany. Colonel Oehring was also very familiar with the operational aspects of a headquarters for his previous, and only, UN experience had been as an operations officer with the second United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF II). He did, however, also have service in Europe as senior staff officer operations for the Canadian land contribution to NATO. In Canada, he had been assistant chief of staff administration for the embryo 1st Canadian Division headquarters in Kingston.

Negotiations also require personal creditability. Colonel Oehring's immediate action to deal with the well-known black market activity on the part of one of the major units under his command probably earned him points with both belligerent parties. It also demonstrated the kind of courage, as mentioned by a professor at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), needed by commanders in this era of peace support operations.[35]

"Petro Kenya" was the nickname given to the black market activity of selling diesel in the Kenyan battalion's AOR in Sector South. Colonel Oehring chose not to turn a "blind eye" to this illegal trade, which poisoned UNPROFOR relations not only with the Croatians, but also with the Krajina Serbs themselves. It was also necessary to dispel rumours and innuendo. Although he himself credits the arrival of a Canadian Military Police (MP) officer with some additional Canadian MPs as the key ingredient, it was his will to do something that brought results.[36] Only a few Kenyans were actually involved in the delivery of black market diesel, which was recorded on video, but some of their military superiors and others, including foreign civilians outside the battalion, were guilty of knowing about these activities and doing nothing.

There were short-term repercussions. Some Kenyans, and no doubt some other UN personnel, both military and civilian, were upset by the end put to these black market dealings. Colonel Oehring even suggested that there were some threats to his personal safety.[37] The immediate tactical benefits included the respect and trust that he gained for himself that ultimately contributed to the success of the Gentlemen's Agreement negotiations. Success in later negotiations might well be traced to this decisive action early in Colonel Oehring's command against a well-known black market operation.

Colonel Oehring attributes his success in dealing with the two warring parties to the "credits in the bank" that had been put there by the actions of 2 PPCLI in their Medak Pocket action.[38] The successor Canadian battalion, 1 R22eR, with their professional conduct, further added to Colonel Ohering's "bank account." In fact, Oehring was able to issue radio orders to 1 R22eR and rely on a potent response. The original 1 R22eR, from the Canadian base in Europe, had already been bloodied in UNPROFOR service, having been taken by then-Lieutenant-Colonel Michel Jones to Sarajevo in 1992. This "Van Doo" battalion had been the 3rd Battalion, but had been renamed the 1st when Canadian Forces Europe was closed. The battalion naturally included many veterans from the 1st Battalion of the

regiment that had served in 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (4 CMBG) and the Former Yugoslavia in 1992 with UNPROFOR.

At one point, Colonel Oehring considered the option of leading Canadian troops to extract the surrounded Croatian Army element on Trlo Ridge. The value of having a well-trained and equipped force available for use at short notice, which was recognized as such by the belligerents, was not lost on him.[39] In having a well-trained, experienced Canadian unit under his command, Oehring was blessed in all his dealings with the belligerents in a way that Dallaire was not. Colonel Oehring's own background as a commanding officer and senior staff officer in both 4 CMBG and the 1st Canadian Division may have contributed to his mutually beneficial command relationship with 1 R22eR. It should be added that the battalion received an UNPROFOR unit citation for their performance during their tour of duty in Sector South.

Innovative Use of ROE becomes a Strategic Activity

Colonel Oehring also put into practice an innovative tactic that had "strategic" implications. As is so often the case in OOTW, small

Personal photograph, Colonel (ret'd) George Oehring

Touring the line held by CANBAT I.

actions seemingly only of tactical significance play a strategic role when compounded at the strategic level. Colonel Oehring instituted what he calls the policy of "deliberate endangerment" to fulfil that part of the UNPROFOR mandate which called for the protection of minorities.[40] The UNPROFOR ROEs only allowed the use of weapons for self-protection by UN personnel. Colonel Oehring's solution was to deploy soldiers under his command so that they would become the potential first target of criminal activities.

The strategic benefits of Colonel Oehring's protection plan needs further study.[41] What can be demonstrated, however, is that after Kenyan soldiers assumed such a stance, Croats in the Serb village of Matasi, and the livestock that they needed for survival, "were left unmolested, the armed presence of the Kenyans achieving the intended objective without them having been directly challenged."[42] The Canadian battalion protected Croat villagers in Rodalijice, and the Czech battalion, the Croat villagers in Podlapac, during Colonel Oehring's tenure of command.

Individual soldiers of UNPROFOR were often a key part in the successful operations of this type. Although Colonel Oehring's personal standing with both sides contributed to the success of his deliberate endangerment policy, it also depended on UN soldiers. Invariably, it would be the one or two soldiers who stood in the path of a would-be ethnic cleanser that would make a difference. Thus, Colonel Oehring's policy, although contributing to the strategic posture of UNPROFOR in Croatia, also carried a degree of risk for the soldiers.

The Soldier as a Strategic Asset

December 1993 brought with it an opportunity and a challenge. A snowstorm presented Oehring with a negotiating prospect. But, it also brought a new challenge for the Canadian commander of Sector South. A larger than expected mechanized battalion of 1,200 soldiers from the arid deserts of Jordan was to be inserted in this sector in February 1994. This meant that the region, par-

ticularly at high altitude, would still be in the grip of snow and cold temperatures.

The Jordanian unit may have been about twice the size of the shrunken Canadian battalion, reduced after the September rotation from Canada, but there were doubts, certainly in the mind of the Sector South commander, about their winter equipment, particularly their clothing. Alerting or reminding the UN staff of the severe shortage of accommodation infrastructure in his sector, Colonel Oehring was surprised to hear that Zagreb's solution was to put these warriors from the desert in tents on arrival in February. They seemed to have forgotten that only the coastal belt benefited from Mediterranean climatic conditions.

Recognizing that personnel coping with cold temperatures would operate with extremely limited effectiveness, Colonel Oehring told the authorities in Zagreb that he, as Sector South commander, did not want any Jordanians in his AOR living in tents. Colonel Oehring prevailed. All Jordanians were accommodated in buildings and some were commuting as late as May 1994 from motels and hotels on the Croatian coast.[43] In this instance, Oehring's foresight and concern for his troops was clearly evident. He was prepared to sacrifice some tactical benefits for longer-term operational goals. The overall operational objectives of Sector South were best served by having the Jordanians successfully established in permanent accommodations. This action permitted soldiers unaccustomed to winter conditions to make a more favourable impression on both Croatians and Croatian Serbs than would have been the case if the Jordanian contingent struggled to survive under canvas (of perhaps doubtful quality) in conditions of snow and cold.

As any commander knows, on a mission such as UNPROFOR Sector South, every soldier counts. Personnel of national contingents are the major assets available to a Force Commander. Colonel Oehring's practice of doing away with honour guards when he made visits put soldiers where they would do the most good, on the ground between belligerents. This set a precedent

during his tenure which not only helped the immediate tactical situation of whatever contingent area he was visiting, but also benefited operational objectives by changing the mindsets of how the most valuable human resource, the soldier, was best used. Perhaps unlike more intense combat situations found on the spectrum of peace support operations, manpower must be husbanded more carefully than equipment. "Boots on the ground," not the number of armoured vehicles available, often determine success in operations such as UNPROFOR's mission in Sector South. Colonel Oehring appears to have excelled in this regard.[44]

The Warfighter as a Peacemaker and Keeper!

Like Dallaire, Oehring had been trained as a warfighter. Presumably, he was considered to be one of the most competent at his rank level in Canada's artillery corps for he was selected to command the artillery regiment in Canada's contribution to NATO, 4 CMBG, located in Lahr, West Germany. In Europe, a Canadian unit commanding officer was able to practice what he would have to do in war, as envisaged by NATO, and in the words of one well-known Canadian general, "we got very good at it."[45]

As artillery commander in Canada's NATO brigade, Colonel Oehring had the confidence of both his superiors and the other unit commanders. "I had absolutely no concerns about the indirect fire support that he organized for my brigade, and I am convinced that my battle group commanders felt the same way," commented one officer.[46] Indeed, the commander of the Canadian reconnaissance squadron, the unit most dependent on artillery fire to engage potential foes, stated that he "was ready to go to war with his [Oehring's] support."[47] Colonel Oehring's potential as a so-called "warfighter" was further recognized by his selection to remain with Canada's brigade as the senior operations officer coordinating operational activities for the brigadier who commanded the Canadian contribution.

In contrast, Colonel Oehring's UN experience was limited to six months as an operations officer with UNEF II headquarters, car-

rying out tasks not unrelated to those of any military operations officer. For an officer whose potential was seen to be as a "warfighter" by the Royal Canadian Artillery and his superiors, Colonel Oehring's leadership in Sector South demonstrates the flexibility that Professor Hal Klepak suggests "has been the mark of successful generals in the past."[48] It is perhaps ironic that this leadership identified in the context of fighting Soviet hordes in Europe was proven to be so outstanding under the stresses of a peace support operation.[49] Training to lead in combat did not prevent Colonel Oehring from leading effectively in OOTW and putting in place a so-called traditional peacekeeping regime that resembled what was in place in Cyprus and on the Golan Heights.[50]

Operational-Level Military Activities under a Peace Support Mandate

About the time that Colonel Oehring was struggling with the many challenges of bringing a stop to the shelling and shooting in Sector South, Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) John English was delivering a lecture on "The Operational Art" at RMC in Kingston. Professor English threw out the theoretical challenge of whether operational art could in fact be "profitably applied by small armies in pursuit of strategic objectives."[51] Colonel Oehring's command in Sector South provides a resounding "yes" to that query.

Within days of his arrival, he started with the small step of making contact with all of the belligerent commanders in the field who commanded the troops who manned the frontlines, as well as meeting with the leaders of all of the organizations in Sector South who could assist in furthering his goals, such as the senior military observer and the head of the UNCIVPOL. Initial negotiations led to cease-fires limited in time and location. There was a cease-fire to harvest grapes that expanded to cover All Saints' Day for the whole sector. A Christmas cease-fire included all the UNPROFOR AORs. A final, more permanent cease-fire lasted for two years.[52] If the campaign objective was to buy time for politicians to work whatever magic they could, then Colonel Oehring

provides an almost textbook example of the application, consciously or intuitively, of operational art. A campaign to end the shelling and small arms fire had succeeded. Civilian casualties ended. A zone of disengagement was created. Both were to last for more than two years. It is unfortunate that the Croatians made better use of this pause in hostilities than the international community, but it does not detract from Colonel Oehring's demonstration of operational art during his leadership in Sector South.

Conclusions

Success in peace support operations is difficult to measure. The criteria used by the so-called players, actors and interested parties to determine success vary immensely.

The measure of Colonel Oehring's achievements as a leader can be gauged in comparison with what happened before he took com-

Personal photograph, Colonel (ret'd) George Oehring

During the handover of command to Major-General Kotil of the Czech Army (nearest camera). Oehring is being briefed by Colonel Mamoud (fourth from right), Commanding Officer of Jordanian Battalion 3, recently arrived in Sector South.

mand. Eight months after the Croatian offensive of January 1993, the Medak firefight between UNPROFOR troops, in this case Canadians and French, and the Croatian Army occurred. Eight months after the Medak Pocket incident of September 1993, a period that coincides with George Oehring's command of Sector South, the UN reported "almost total compliance" with the provision of the 29 March 1994 cease-fire agreement. In fact, technically, this cease-fire is a true UNPROFOR success story as the UN military presence in Croatia came under the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO) at the end of March 1995, so the failures of May and August 1995 to stem the Croatian assaults can be considered under UNCRO's mandate. Thus, Colonel Oehring handed off a success story to the Czech major-general who followed him.

To achieve this end state, Colonel Oehring used the negotiation process itself as a tactic to buy "shell-free" days then weeks. This contributed to a true demonstration of the operational art in practice, albeit with talk rather than technology as the prime weapons system. As the deputy commander of all UNPROFOR's military forces in the Former Yugoslavia at that time noted:

> He was able to persuade them individually to comply with ceasefires which he termed 'gentlemen's agreements' first a week at a time, later a Christmas truce which was further extended. Taking his lead, we [UNPROFOR headquarters] developed a 'Strategy of Small Steps' which extended over the four UNPA's, easing the way for Churkin [Russia] and Redman [US] to negotiate a formal ceasefire.[53]

It should also be noted that Colonel Oehring's leadership and prompt action in the Trlo Ridge incident made possible the success of the 29 March cease-fire between Croatians and Croatian Serbs. In fact, the contribution of Colonel Oehring's personality to his success raises the question of selection.[54]

Can just any Canadian leader with the appropriate knowledge and skills command under such circumstances, or should atti-

tudes and personality also be considered, bearing in mind that selection of sector commanders or national nomination for such appointments occurs at a very high level? Command of an international or UN force in OOTW should not be just an opportunity to provide an appropriate ticket punch. Personality, the core of any individual, appears to be a key ingredient to successful leadership, as much or more than any training.

Canada was well served in Colonel Oehring's case by a last minute appointment. He brought two years of peace to what some described as "the most sensitive and violent area of Croatia."[55] For this alone, his leadership merits serious attention. Colonel Oehring put in place innovative tactics, which could have furthered the strategic goals of organizations such as the UN, with his policy of deliberate endangerment that protected the few surviving elements of the Croatian community in Croatian Serb villages. This action could probably have contributed to the reconciliation of Croats with Croatian Serbs if Operation Storm and the subsequent flight of Croatian Serbs had not made such hopes impossible to realize. Colonel Oehring did his part in not only creating the conditions for compliance with the overall cease-fire, but also in undertaking acts such as protecting isolated minorities which would have furthered any future reconciliation or accommodation of the presence of other ethnic elements.

His training to lead in war, not peacekeeping, and his use of the operational art deserve notice owing to the answers from the field that they provide to some very valid questions raised in the academic literature. Colonel Oehring does answer another academic challenge, this time raised by Professor Douglas Bland of Queen's University, who lamented the lack of contributions made by senior leaders to doctrine development.[56] Colonel Oehring, for one, has already responded to this need. He has contributed material to the Army Lessons Learned Cell almost since his return, which arguably will reach more "operators" than academic writers. In addition, the Canadian Forces Peace Support Training Centre, amongst others, has tapped into his experience by requesting him to lecture.

Colonel Oehring never held general rank in the CF. He replaced a French general and in turn was replaced by a Czech general. "The other three sector commanders [in Croatia], all wearing a star, could not hold a candle to [Colonel Oehring]."[57] This is why his leadership in Sector South deserves the spotlight of scholarly focus under the heading of "generalship." Canadians and others can learn from his tenure of command in Sector South as it teaches leaders, and those interested in leadership, "a lot" about "generalship" in the context of one of UNPROFOR's success stories.

Endnotes

1 Chris Wattie, "Canada's Not-So-Secret War," *National Post*, 11 December 2004, RB 8. A review of Carol Off's book, *Ghosts of Medak Pocket: The Story of Canada's Secret War* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 2004), lists other books dating back to 1998 that describe this battle. Not cited by Wattie are books written in Europe, such as S.B. Husum's *At War Without Weapons*, a 1998 account translated into English from Danish by a Scandinvian UN Military Observer who devotes several chapters to the Medak Pocket and the Canadians.

2 Carol Off, in her book *The Ghosts of Medak Pocket*, either deliberately or through ignorance, maligns the francophone battalion that followed by saying that their commanding officer disappointed the Patricias by delaying the arrival of his battalion by two weeks because they realized that Croatia was not Cyprus. 1 R22eR had many veterans scarcely back from Yugoslavian service within the mandatory twelve-month window of remaining in Canada before being sent on operations again. 1 R22eR deployed on schedule according to Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) John Davidson who, as Assistant Chief of Staff (COS) for Sector South at the time, should know. Telephone conversation with author, 10 January 2005.

3 John English, "The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War," in B.J.C. McKercher and Michael A. Hennessey, eds., *The Operational Art* (Westport: Praeger, 1996), 7-27. He suggests that to attempt to apply the operational level to peacekeeping "may only invite muddle."

4 Donna Winslow, in a paper delivered at the University of Ottawa, entitled "Should Combat Soldiers be Peackeepers?", asked "Can soldiers in the combat arms successfully perform peacekeeping missions?"

5 Hal Klepak, "Some Reflections on Generalship through the Ages," in

Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 34. He says, "Flexibility then has always been a trademark of a successful general or admiral. The difference today may well be that such flexibility tends to be needed more often."

6 Ibid. In speaking about the courage required of generals today, Klepak says that it "is of a different kind, the sort that involves the constant doing of one's duty and the equally constant acceptance of responsibility.

7 Brigadier-General Baudot was replaced by the commander of all the UNPROFOR military forces, General Cot, himself also a Frenchman, before he had completed even the normal minimum of six months in this appointment. The Czech Republic general, Major-General Rostilav Kotil, who was to replace Colonel Oehring almost nine months later in 1994, was not available on short notice in September 1993, thus creating a command opportunity for the Canadian colonel.

8 George Oehring, "The Trlo Ridge Affair," unpublished manuscript, and interview 9 December 2004, and telephone conversation, 7 January 2005 (henceforth Oehring interviews).

9 Use of the media as a weapon system as suggested by Major-General Lewis Mackenzie was scarcely an option for Colonel Oehring. See Lewis Mackenzie, "The Media as a Tool of the Military Commander," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 399.

10 Carol Off, in "Do The Right Thing! Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire in the 1990s," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Warrior Chiefs* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2001), 335, outlines the limitations of Dallaire's small force of 2,500 soldiers. The fact that fellow artillery officer, Colonel Oehring, commanded more resources in the Krajina reflects the priorities of the international community in 1993 and the misplaced optimism or hope regarding the Rwandan agreements.

11 Romeo Dallaire's own account, *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Toronto: Random House, 2003), is perhaps the best known. Lieutenant-General (ret'd) Dallaire also made a contribution to *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* entitled "The Theatre Commander in Conflict Resolution," 249-274.

12 UN Department of Peacekeeping, *The Blue Helmets* (New York: UN, 1996), 519.

13 The two books by Gunther Erich Rothenberg on the military borders of Croatia remain the best accounts of this defensive strategy as applied in the early Krajina. His books are entitled *Austrian Military Border in*

Croatia, 1522-1747 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960) and *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740-1881* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

14 The situation in Bosnia was complex. In Sarajevo, where I served as Senior UN Military Observer from October 1993 until July 1994, I used the example of the Bosnian Croatian artillery in the Kilesjek Pocket shelling the Bosnian Croatian brigade in Sarajevo to illustrate the complexity of the conflict in Bosnia. This was true in other sectors. Most fighting between Herzegovina Croatians and their Islamic neighbours was as savage as any in the former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, in Tuzla, there were effective Bosnian Croatian forces fighting for the Bosnian government against the Bosnian Serbs.

15 Further to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia trial, IT-02-54, the whole thesis of James Gow's book, *The Serbian Project and Its Adversaries: A Strategy of War Crimes*, is that Belgrade orchestrated the war in all parts of the Former Yugoslavia. Apparently, the US Army shared this view much earlier. A 1993 pamphlet on the *Tactics, Techniques and Procedures of the Combatants in Former Yugoslavia* treats 1 and 2 Krajina Corps as part of the Bosnia Serb Army on a diagram on page III-3.

16 "With the explicit consent of the US State and Defense Departments, the firm [MPRI] undertook to modernize and retrain the command structure of the Croatian national army, including the general staff." See Thomas K. Adams, "The New Mercenaries and the Privatization of Conflict," *Parameters*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2 (Summer, 1999), 109 and 110. A Canadian citizen holding a valid Canadian passport, Gojko Susak, was Tudjman's Minister of Defence. There is speculation that Susak's death prevented a possible appearance before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

17 George Oehring, "Negotiations," *The Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (February, 2000), 2-4, and interviews. Lieutenant-Colonel Davidson, Colonel Oehring's Assistant COS, also remembers a cease-fire at this time permitting harvest of plums used to make slivovitz. Davidson e-mail to author on 3 March 2005.

18 The Maslenicia Bridge was one of four objectives captured by the Croatians in limited attacks conducted in January 1993 in the Sector South AOR. The others were the Peruca Dam, Zemunik Airfield and the Molavaki Plateau. See Lieutenant-Colonel Jim Calvin, as quoted in *Chances for Peace*, an oral history edited by Sean M. Maloney and John Llambias (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2002), 115. Gow also discusses the strategic importance of the bridge and the dam in his book. The retreat of

the French UN peacekeepers and the rumour that they knew about these impending Croatian attacks is believed to have prejudiced the Krajina Serbs against trusting or cooperating with the French in the months leading up to the Medak Pocket. In fact, the French troops were in the process of being withdrawn in September 1993.

19 An UNMO, S.B. Husum, in his book, *At War Without Weapons* (Shrewsbury: Airlife, 1998), 94, says that one in a hundred vehicles crossing the pontoon bridge in September 1993 were military. Of course, civilian vehicles no doubt transported Croatian military material. Davidson e-mail to author.

20 Gow, *The Serbian Project*, 155-156. The Adriatic Highway was the one north-south route not under Serb control, but the destruction of the Maslenicia Bridge rendered this artery impassable until the Croats captured enough area to construct a pontoon bridge, itself subjected to Serb artillery fire.

21 Husum notes in his book that at the end of October 1993, when he left Sector South, UNMO duty at the observation post overlooking the Maslenicia Bridge was no longer considered a tour at a "hotspot." See Husum, *At War Without Weapons*, 119.

22 UN, *Blue Berets*, 518.

23 Oehring, "The Trlo Ridge Affair."

24 Oehring, "Negotiations."

25 Gow suggests that the war in Sector South had already become stalemated. See Gow, *The Serbian Project*, 155. RCMP Inspector Robert Monroe, who served as the head of the UNCIVPOL in Sector South during Colonel Oehring's command, agrees, stating that in the Krajina, Serbs seemed to know that they were already beaten. Telephone interview with the author, 14 February 2005. These assessments may have validity. However, the Krajina Serbs did not stop fighting and did not surrender anything. Shelling could continue to kill and perhaps raise the Krajina to greater importance. Oehring seized upon the opportunity presented to bring a stop to the hostilities so that a political accommodation could be worked out.

26 Telephone interview with Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) John Davidson.

27 The term "disengagement," as opposed to "cease-fire" or "separation" or "buffer," may well have originated with Colonel Oehring who was sensitive to how both belligerent parties did not want a cease-fire line to harden into a "settlement" line of more permanence.

28 UN, *Blue Berets*, 519.

29 One wonders what was "traditional" about the 1960s Congo operation or indeed Cyprus until the Turks invaded in 1974.

30 Oehring, "The Trlo Ridge Affair" and interviews.

31 Oehring and Monroe interviews.

32 Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 3rd ed. (London: Cassell, 1975).

33 In his interview, Inspector Monroe remarked on how Colonel Oehring broke down the barriers between the UN military and the other agencies involved in the Sector South peace process. Whereas to see the previous French commander had required making an appointment 24 hours in advance, Inspector Monroe, as chief of the Sector South UNCIVPOL, could expect to see Colonel Oehring within five minutes. Such meetings could occur outside of the commander's office. Moreover, Colonel Oehring had the UNCIVPOL headquarters moved from a separate building at a separate location to a space within his own headquarters. Monroe said that a free flow of information was opened with Colonel Oehring's arrival. Colonel Oehring made a point of taking him with him on negotiations and he remarked on how effective he was, being able to talk to all levels of people and all ranks of soldiers.

34 Klepak, op. cit.

35 Colonel Oehring gives credit for this to Peter Nickerson, then a Canadian Military Police captain. Oehring interviews.

36 Colonel Oehring made a point of discussing approaches that he took to reassure Kenyan soldiers that he held the wrongdoers accountable, not the Kenyan battalion. He mentioned the threat to him personally in his interview, a fear collaborated by John Davidson in his own interview. My own 1993 Sarajevo experience indicates that criminal "hits" are much easier to execute in quasi war zones.

37 Oehring interviews.

38 Oehring, "The Trlo Ridge Affair" and interviews.

39 George Oehring, "Rights to Engagement," *The Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (October 2000), 11-13.

40 Author's article for the Centre of Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance, Hawaii, done with input from Colonel Oehring, "Preserving and Protecting the Human Bridges Over the Chasms of Conflict," *The Liaison*, Vol. III, No. 2 (2004), 25-34. Study needs to be done on the impact of Colonel Oehring's policy in postwar Croatia. For example, were some Serbs enabled to return to their homes as a result of leaving a Croat survivor in the village?

41 Oehring, "Rights to Engagement."

42 Klepak, op. cit. This is also an example of the difficulties of UN command, as at the same time, the Czech battalion increased in size by some hundred. Other difficulties included a Slovak engineer element that

remained co-located with the Czech contingent after the separation of Czechoslovakia into two states. However, these engineers were not under Colonel Oehring's command. John Davidson suggested in e-mail correspondence that Colonel Oehring's high standing with the headquarters in Zagreb after his fall successes enabled him to challenge the UN bureaucracy, in particular those holding the purse strings, on the question of Jordanian accommodation.

43 Oehring interviews. For example, Colonel Oehring stopped visiting units during meal hours because rations from the soldiers were diverted to ensure that he, as Commander Sector South, received a "worthy spread."

44 Major-General (ret'd) Jack Dangerfield, written statement dated 12 January 2005. General Dangerfield contributed a chapter entitled "A Perspective on Contemporary Canadian Generalship: Operations in NATO" to *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral*, 213-233.

45 Ibid.

46 Major (ret'd) David Wilkinson, former Officer Commanding Reconnaissance Squadron, Royal Canadian Dragoons, e-mail communication to author, 5 January 2005.

47 Klepak, op. cit., and Wilkinson, who noted that Colonel Oehring "thought outside the box" of conventional doctrine.

48 Colonel Richard Hatton, in "Stressors and Stress on Peacekeeping Operations," outlines some special challenges in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 301-319.

49 This would also appear to respond to the question raised by Winslow about combat arms officers as leaders in peace support operations, although it may not suffice to answer on the question of soldiers. It also responds to the question raised by Professor Bland in his chapter "Military Command in Canada" in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 132, about training for war being sufficient for UN operations.

50 English, op. cit.

51 Major-General A.R. Forand, in testimony to the Croatia inquiry, mentions the cease-fire in place when he assumed command of Sector South in 1995. See Transcript of testimony for 29 November 1999, Croatia Inquiry, obtained under Access to Information.

52 Major-General (ret'd) J.A. MacInnis, e-mail to author on 6 January 2005.

53 Both Inspector Monroe and General MacInnis comment on the special personal qualities that made Colonel Oehring so successful. General MacInnis, as the senior Canadian in UNPROFOR, was of course involved

in the selection of Colonel Oehring as the interim replacement for Brigadier-General Baudot.

54 http://www.gg.ca.

55 Bland, op. cit., suggested that senior officers had "made little effort to record UN doctrine or to invent a UN system of command." Colonel Oehring's published works, already cited, in addition to yet another Army Lessons Learned Cell bulletin contribution on stress, as well as lectures such as those cited in Sean Maloney's CISS McNaughton Paper No. 10 on *Operation Bolster* (Canada's ECMM contingent), indicate that at least one individual with experience of generalship attempted to pass on his knowledge as well as to propose new doctrine. It is to be hoped that Colonel Oehring's experiences will appear in a subsequent book in this series.

56 MacInnis, op. cit.

57 Dangerfield, op. cit.

CHAPTER 8

A Return to Heroic Leadership: Major-General A.R. Forand's Command in UNCRO's Sector South During Operation Storm

Roy Thomas

"It is of overriding importance," wrote the renowned British historian Sir John Keegan, "to recognize that military achievement is not an end in itself."[1] Using this criterion to examine Major-General Alain Forand's leadership in Sector South in Croatia in 1995, as well as in Operation Recuperation in Quebec in 1998, it is possible to challenge Keegan's own conclusion in his seminal work *The Mask of Command* that "today the best must find conviction to play hero no more."[2]

Operations Other Than War (OOTW) have been a significant feature of the military scene since Keegan's book first appeared just a few years before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Since then, it has been demonstrated on a number of occasions that in peace support operations, as well as in domestic operations, heroic leadership, such as that shown by Major-General Forand, is required in today's environment, as opposed to the inactivity of one who does nothing, posited by Keegan, under the shadow of potential nuclear conflict in the Cold War.[3] This heroism may not be of a kind recognized by warriors in the armies of Alexander the Great or of "the heroic stamp to which films and books have made us accustomed."[4] It is a moral courage that enables the general or senior commander to do

Photographer Corporal Yves Bournival, CFJIC, ISC92-5775

A ruined Croatian village, obscured by the smoke from burning fires.

the right thing immediately to save lives and relieve suffering, rather than waiting for someone higher to eventually, if ever, tell them what to do. In this environment, immediate action often translates into saving lives. The world has indeed moved from an age of post-heroic leadership, which spawned the Enron and sponsorship scandals, into an era in which at least some military operations still demand heroics of a moral nature if nothing else.

The mission of Major-General Forand's command in Sector South in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO) can seem, from one perspective, to have been a failure. In the end, Forand's four UN battalions were unable to enforce their UN mandate of maintaining the zone of disengagement. Quite simply, they failed to separate the Croatians from the Croatian Serbs and their Bosnian Serb allies during the onslaught of Croatia's Operation Storm, which included massed tank and mechanized infantry attacks.

However, Forand's leadership while commanding UN troops in the path of an aggressor provides a heroic moral model for aspiring lead-

ers, not only in the Canadian Forces (CF), but also in those armies that may provide peacekeeping or peacemaking troops in the future. His actions in Sector South provide an illustration of the special kind of courage that at least one historian from the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) has argued is necessary in today's conflicts.[5]

Major-General Forand did not lack the courage associated with ancient heroes. Indeed, it is likely that if he had been born a Greek in Alexander's time, he might well have been one of the foremost heroic leaders of that era for he displayed similar personal physical courage during an invasion on another UN military operation. In 1974, Turkey, ironically one of Canada's NATO allies, mounted an amphibious and airborne assault to enlarge the Turkish enclave on Cyprus, thus creating a split of that island state which is still in effect today. In this attack that cut through UN military positions, Forand, then a captain with the Canadian Airborne Regiment, displayed physical courage of the "traditional kind." The commendation for his Star of Courage (SC) clearly captured his actions:

> On July 23, 1974, during the war in Cyprus, a Canadian patrol conducting a group of combatants out of a UN controlled area came under fire. Several combatant soldiers were killed or wounded and the Canadian officer leading the escort party was wounded. One of his men who began to render first aid to the fallen officer was also hit. At the bottom of a creek bed, the victims were exposed to continuing machine gun fire. Coming on the scene, Alain Forand arranged for covering fire and, with complete disregard for his own safety, he crawled forward over the exposed ground, to aid the two casualties. Single-handedly, he managed to drag the wounded officer some distance up onto the bank of the creek where others helped carry him out of the danger area. Forand then directed the rescue of the wounded soldier.[6]

Forand's experience in Cyprus as a junior officer as part of a UN force that found itself in the path of an invading army in 1974

had a distinct influence on him. This event would later encourage his decision to stand fast in Sector South 21 years later. In that situation, the courage and moral leadership he displayed in the Krajina in 1995 was very much of a different kind than that displayed in 1974. In fact, his performance in Sector South, as well as later as commander of the Canadian Forces in Quebec during the Ice Storm of 1998, merits him the distinction of a moral hero.

Major-General Forand's Command in Sector South in Context

The cease-fire agreed to by the Croatians and Serbians in March 1994 created a situation not unlike the one Forand had left in Cyprus years earlier after the Turkish invasion. A zone of separation or disengagement between the Croatians and the Croatian Serbs had been established and was being enforced by four UN battalions, one of which was Canadian, all of which were interposed between the belligerents much as was the case on the Golan Heights in the Middle East.[7] This cease-fire was intended to have been the first step in an attempt by the international community to move beyond merely stopping the shelling and shooting and reach a substantial agreement to stop the fighting. Some progress had been made in early-1994. In December 1994, the Zagreb-Belgrade highway was opened, as was the oil pipeline through the Krajina. In addition, work was proceeding in parallel on a plan for a political settlement of the Croatian Serbs and the new Croatian state in the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs).[8]

However, the Croatian President, like most belligerent politicians, was always afraid that the cease-fire lines imposed to stop the shooting would in fact become political boundaries.[9] Thus, the announcement of the Croatian President, Franko Tudjman, in January 1995 that the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) mandate would not be renewed was perhaps to be expected. The Croatians had publicly argued that UNPROFOR was not creating conditions for a permanent peace.[10] Moreover, he did not want the UN to interfere with his plans for the future.

In hindsight, there were many indications that the Croatians were in fact agreeing to put into place a so-called cease-fire or truce to further their own purposes. They wished to use it to prepare for a military solution, rather than comply with the objectives laid out by the international community. Interestingly, it seems that the Croatians had the support of some Western nations.[11] One analyst considers the capture of Kupres, in Bosnia, which took place in November 1994, even before the highway to Belgrade was opened, as arguably the most important operation of any conducted in the Yugoslav Wars in that "it signaled the Serbian potential for collapse."[12]

The UN reacted quickly to the Croatian threat to terminate the mandate of UNPROFOR. It created a new mission, namely UNCRO.[13] Major-General Forand took command of UNCRO on 8 July 1995. Its mandate was based on the 29 March 1994 cease-fire agreement. However, the two months leading up to Forand's arrival in Sector South had been marked by ominous signs of further violence.

On 1 May 1995, the Croatian Army launched an attack on the new UNCRO's Sector West, and by the next day had essentially secured all militarily important positions, despite the protests of

Photographer Sergeant R. Thompson, CFJIC, ISC93-5104-23

Keeping watch. A soldier from the PPCLI observes the desolate countryside.

the UN Security Council and in total disregard of the proposals by the Secretary General's Special Representative on the ground for a cease-fire. Within a few days, more than 10,000 Croatian Serb refugees had crossed into Bosnia-Herzegovina. Not surprisingly, based on the conflict's conduct to date, human rights violations were reported.[14] On 4 June, the Croatian Army and Bosnian Croat forces launched a combined infantry and artillery attack in the area of Mount Dinara. Another attack followed two days later.[15]

The threat of violence loomed even larger once Major-General Forand assumed command. On 28 July, the combined Croatian and Croatian Bosnian forces captured Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoc in western Bosnia-Herzegovina. As a result, they severed the main Croatian Serb supply route from Banja Luka, which was the western centre of the Bosnian Serbs, and Knin, the erstwhile capital of the so-called Krajina Serbian Republic.[16]

The Canadian battalion in Sector South (which was also known as Canadian Battalion 2 or CANBAT 2), which had arrived in May 1995, was from Forand's own regiment, specifically the second Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment (2 R22eR), which was commanded by then-Lieutenant-Colonel Jacques Morneau. Forand's UN command in Sector South also included three other infantry battalions from Kenya, the Czech Republic and Jordan, as well as a Slovak engineer company, an Indonesian medical company and a Czech field surgical team. In addition to positioning themselves in the buffer zone between the belligerents, Major-General Forand's force was required to protect 13 Croat monitored villages, as well as to monitor four Border Crossing Points. If UN Military Observers (UNMOs), UN Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL), and personnel from other UN agencies are also included, Forand was responsible for over 5,000 personnel.[17]

At 2300 hours on 3 April 1995, the Canadian Embassy in Zagreb warned 2 R22eR that a Croatian assault was eminent. At 0320 hours on the following day, the UNCRO commander relayed a message to his headquarters (HQ) from the Croatians that they

would attack at 0500 hours.[18] This brief summary illustrates only too well the difficulties under which Major-General Forand operated during his short tenure of command in Sector South. Forand's first moral challenge on assuming command on 8 July was the result of having two chains of command.

Before the Storm

"I was aware of the [Canadian] government direction given in June to CANBAT 2, in Visoko, to withdraw from two OPs [Observation Posts]," revealed Forand. "If the Canadians, who had the best fortified OPs, who were dedicated professional soldiers with adequate equipment and excellent training, were ordered to withdraw by the [Canadian] government," he explained, "then I felt that my other nationalities could seriously be inclined to follow them." He added, "Furthermore with my strong advocacy of staying in place, I would have lost my credibility and I would have no other option but to resign and this I made known to the DCDS [Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff] in a telephone call."[19] The DCDS was the commander through whom deployed commanders reported to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) on national matters.

During the Croatian actions in May in Sector West, the UN troops had literally fled their posts, an act that "had tarnished the reputation of the UN in the eyes of the belligerents" and in fact made the activities of other UN troops in the Former Yugoslavia more difficult.[20] Major-General Forand considered that the UN mandate was still in effect until proven otherwise. Based on that perspective, as well as Forand's own experience in Cyprus in 1974, he realized that once the UN abandoned an OP, it was almost impossible to reoccupy it. Moreover, the only way to gain information was to be where the action was, even if that meant remaining in the path of an armoured assault. The UN presence, felt Major-General Forand, might deter belligerent violations in dealing with prisoners of war (PWs) and civilians. UN credibility, no matter what the outcome, was enhanced if the UN troops remained in

place, and if the mandate survived, it certainly made resumption of the previous tasks easier.[21] In addition, based on an inflated assessment of Croatian Serb capabilities and will, combined with an underestimation of the Croatian Army's planning abilities, the UN also determined that a standoff might be a possibility. In this light, staying in place would greatly assist monitoring a renewed cease-fire.[22] Furthermore, if potential casualties were a concern, Forand's Cyprus experience indicated that more personnel were wounded when they vacated their OPs than when they simply stayed put.[23]

As a result, he ordered that the OPs in Sector South would remain manned. He also dictated that all unit headquarters and assets would stay in place if war broke out and that the UN troops would carry on their mandate to the best of their abilities, at least until there was an indication that the UN mandate no longer applied.[24] Additionally, Forand also told his other commander, Jordanian Major-General Eid Kamal Al-Rodan, commander of all the UNCRO military forces in all four UNCRO sectors, of his intention of resigning immediately if ordered by the UN hierarchy to evacuate his Sector South positions.[25]

Operation Storm

On 4 August 1995, following an artillery barrage that started at 0500 hours, the Croatian Army launched a series of attacks at the formation level using infantry supported by tanks, close air support and special operations forces along the entire 275 kilometres of frontage on the zone of separation. There were two major penetrations of the Krajina Serb defences on the first day in Sector South. By 5 August, Croatian tanks had reached Knin, the capital of the so-called Serb Krajina Republic. By the second day, Forand considered that the war was over in his 5,600 kilometres of Sector South.

The complexity of Balkan politics was illustrated by the appearance of Bosnian Government troops who tried to intimidate UN

Czech engineers into surrendering vehicles and stores while abandoning their camp. The threat of NATO air strikes may have deterred them. Ironically, NATO airpower was in fact about to be used in Bosnia in operations against the Bosnian Government's enemy, the Bosnian Serbs, in Operation Deliberate Force.[26] In the zone of separation, the UN was forcibly evicted from 19 Kenyan, eight Canadian and four Czech OPs. In addition, Croatian soldiers co-located themselves in two Jordanian OPs. In total, one Kenyan and two Czechs were killed and three Czechs were wounded during Operation Storm.[27]

The other UN personnel, such as the UNMOs, the UNCIVPOL, the UN High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and various other UN agencies, had taken shelter in Forand's HQ compound. The number of UN personnel for whom Major-General Forand felt responsible within Sector South totalled 5,000, as noted earlier. Of these, by the time that Croatian tanks reached Knin on 5 August, 1,000 were in his compound joining his own HQ staff and security element. The camp was originally built to accommodate and secure only 250 individuals. To this number were added refugees who also sought shelter at Forand's HQ.

On the night of 4 August, Major-General Forand decided to admit 250 Serb refugees to the protection provided by his HQ compound. Knin was being shelled, but his HQ was not. An estimated 2,000 rounds fell on Knin in a 27-hour span. Only one dropped close to Forand's location, about 300 metres away, killing seven civilians and wounding three others. Forand's decision to shelter the Croatian Serbs was taken against the advice, indeed the entreaties, of the UNHCR representative. The UNHCR position was that these people were not refugees, but internally displaced persons (IDPs). Moreover, there were limits on the amount of food and shelter available.[28]

Major-General Forand admits that sheltering civilians really entailed two decisions. "I knew that as soon as I opened the doors, I could not close them again."[29] Initially the refugees, or IDPs,

sheltered by Forand in his HQ compound included some Croatians who left once the Croatian Army had secured the former Krajina Serb Republic area. Not surprisingly, the total number of refugees sheltered by Major-General Forand in his headquarters area rose to a peak of over 1,200, of which 1,181 were eventually evacuated under UN auspices and protection in September.[30]

The one shell that dropped close to the HQ compound resulted in Major-General Forand's shelter becoming a hospital facility as well. In the process of delivering casualties from the shell impact to the Knin hospital, Forand quickly learned that the Croat Serb medical facility had also been hit by shell fire and was in a state of chaos. As a result, he decided to add the 35 wounded or sick patients from the Knin hospital to the increasing numbers of civilians already gathered in his compound. This involved evacuating sick and wounded civilians through essentially what was a combat zone. Croatian troops appeared during a transfer of patients by the two Canadian armoured ambulances involved; the final medical evacuation had to be negotiated.[31]

The Croatian Serbs that Major-General Forand sheltered certainly had something to fear. In fact, Croatian Army generals, Cermak and Markac, who were leaders in the Operation Storm assaults and subsequent operations, stand indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia at The Hague, as does the overall commander, General Ante Gotovina. Indeed, there were many reports of beatings and individual killings.[32] The question of war criminals first came up, however, when the Croatian Army demanded that Major-General Forand turn over 65 of the Croatian Serbs that he was sheltering to Croatian authorities for persecution as war criminals. Having taken in the refugees, Forand now had to decide what to do with them — these alleged war criminals and the others that numbered over a thousand. Again, he displayed a special type of courage that serves as a model for all.

After the Storm

Media manipulation by the Croats resulted in a visit to Knin by Mr. Tudjman days after the attacks ended and after most of the Croatian Serbs had fled. It took ten days to reestablish running water in Knin. Two months later, there was still no electricity. The resources of Forand's HQ were taxed. Initially, only two meals a day could be provided to the Croatian Serbs being sheltered there.[33] There seemed to be no quick solution. The Croatians made the safe passage of the Croatian Serbs being protected by Major-General Forand to Serb-held territory in Bosnia or Serbia conditional on the handing over of the 65 Serbs that the Croats alleged were war criminals. This Forand refused to do without proof of the allegations against those accused.[34]

Finally, on 16 September, over a month after the Croats had "secured" Knin, evidence was given to Forand which he in turn had validated by UN authorities.[35] Those Croatian Serbs that UN investigators said could be handed over to Croat authorities based on the evidence were. On 16 and 17 September, a total of 1,184 refugees were loaded on 27 buses and transferred to Serbia in an operation that Forand described as "taxing" in the face of Croatian attempts to harass and intimidate. The very old and the very young made up the majority of the refugees.[36]

On 8 August, with the Croatian Army firmly in control of all of Sector South, Major-General Forand gave direction to his UN troops to dismantle their OPs in the zone of disengagement that no longer served to separate the two belligerent parties. The task of monitoring military activities and potential human rights violations was passed to the UNMOs, UNCIVPOL and other UN agencies. Forand himself left Sector South in October 1995 and the final close-out of UN facilities in the sector occurred in mid-December 1995.

The Croatian Army advances had made the UNCRO mandate irrelevant in all but Sector East. In Sector West, which was over-

run in May 1995, the entire UNCRO military force, complete with headquarters and staff, was still in place when Major-General Forand left Yugoslavia and his Sector South command in October. At the same time, in the adjacent zone, Sector North, the UN headquarters was only just coming to grips with closing down. Indeed, Forand's example of an efficient and effective departure was used by UN authorities to prompt their military contingents in Sectors North and West, now occupied by the Croatian Army, to move more quickly in withdrawing.[37] As Major-General Forand stated during the Croatia Inquiry, "the continuing financial drain this procrastination placed on a cash-strapped United Nations is staggering and must be questioned."[38]

Forand's early direction to close down Sector South demonstrated his initiative and ability to anticipate and to make the right decisions to act in advance based on what was the right thing to do. He would show this ability once again during the largest domestic operation ever mounted by the CF in Canada in the face of another disaster, the 1998 Ice Storm.

Another Storm

The magnitude of the CF effort in the Ice Storm of 1998 has still not been completely grasped by the Canadian military, let alone the Canadian public. At its peak, the total number of personnel deployed was 15,784, of which 10,550 were under command of Major-General Forand in the province of Quebec. Forand's command, which for Operation Recuperation became Joint Force Montreal, included over 4,000 CF personnel from outside Quebec, including then-Brigadier-General Andrew Leslie's 1st Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group (1 CMBG), based in Western Canada.[39]

Lost in the details of arguably the largest deployment out-of-garrison since Korea is the fact that Major-General Forand had deployed the troops that he commanded in Quebec three days *before* the official request from the province was received. The official request for assistance was not made until 8 January.[40]

However, on 5 January, when the first effects of the ice storm were felt, Forand had already given direction to monitor the situation, prompted by a request from the Quebec Red Cross for camp cots. The next day, he initiated contact with Quebec Civil Protection, who at that point told him "it was business as usual."[41]

However, Major-General Forand made up his own mind. On the morning of 7 January, he activated his headquarters. On that day, he reduced the readiness time of his provincial quick reaction force. In addition, the remainder of 5 CMBG was placed on eight hours notice to move. The implication of this action, lost on civilians, was that the brigade had to cancel the training for two units in the field and recall the members of another battalion just back from UN duty in Haiti.[42]

By the morning of 8 January, Forand received a request for troops to deploy to St. Hyacinthe, but only for 100 soldiers. Still without an official request from the province of Quebec, Major-General Forand decided that 100 CF personnel were not enough for the situation. He immediately ordered the entire quick reaction force of 450 military personnel to move to St. Hyacinthe and ordered the reminder of 5 CMBG, approximately 3,500 personnel, to deploy to Montreal.[43]

By 1400 hours on 8 January, two hours before the Premier, M. Lucien Bouchard, reportedly made a telephone request to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien for assistance, Major-General Forand's entire quick reaction force of 450 soldiers, plus some additional engineers, were in St. Hyacinthe. The first elements of 5 CMBG arrived in Montreal at 1830 hours that night, with the last element arriving at 0400 hours the following morning. The formal written request was not received until 9 January. Once told that M. Bouchard had made the request on 8 January, Major-General Forand telephoned M. Bouchard's office to explain what actions he had already taken and to outline his priorities of work. On 9 January, Forand requested additional troops from National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ).[44]

Photographer Sergeant Roy, CFJIC, ISC98-38-27

A Canadian soldier carries hydro insulators during the Ice Storm of 1998. Forand's early decision to deploy his forces, on his own initiative, saved local populations from further distress.

The complexities of the operation are self-evident. Forand had to deal with a separatist government, the Federal government, NDHQ, Hydro-Québec, Sûreté du Québec, the Montreal Urban Community and a host of smaller communities. He did not command the resources of these "players," nor indeed did he have full access to their information and planning. A formal request for support to law enforcement was not made by the province of Quebec until 12 January.[45]

Major-General Forand later revealed that the biggest problem he encountered was withdrawing his soldiers from the mission. Always transparent and straightforward, Forand made a commitment that the military presence would only remain for 24 hours in an area after electricity was restored. After all, the soldiers of Forand's force, those from Kingston and Quebec itself, were themselves victims of the Ice Storm. More important as he made clear, CF personnel are a "force of last resort, in place to carry out essential services that cannot be performed by the civilian authorities."[46]

Major-General Forand's command under these challenges deserves special study.[47] It is clear that he anticipated what was needed and made decisions without reference to higher authority. One can only wonder if he had not changed the readiness of his brigade in Valcartier how quickly the troops would have arrived and what impact there might have been on the well-being of the civilian population, as well as the climate of chaos developing in a "powerless" society. This is further evidence of when doing the right thing immediately, without the security of higher authority, made a difference, an act of moral courage which has slipped under the radar screen of military and political commentators alike.

Major-General Forand's final position of responsibility in service to Canadians was as the chief operator for the federal government in facing the perceived threats arising from Y2K. He was head of the National Contingency Planning Group (NCPG), and would have been the first decision-making individual of significant authority if a problem had occurred at midnight when 1999 came to an end and the year 2000 dawned. Fortunately, none of the anticipated crises developed, but it is hard to imagine any leader, military or civilian, better suited to have met these challenges.

A Legacy Shared

A common criticism applied against many of our former Canadian peace support operations commanders has been that they have not shared their experience.[48] In the case of Major-General Forand, he

has indeed spoken about the moral challenges that he faced. On the moral issues that tested his leadership in Sector South, his views appeared within a year of his return to Canada.[49] He has given his opinion on both of his experiences, in addition to his views on leadership, to CF audiences and staff colleges, as well as journals. Furthermore, he has remained active and outspoken as the Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps.[50] In retirement, as on operations, he remains frank and straightforward.

Conclusions

Major-General Alain Forand possesses unique experience. None of Canada's other generals, serving or retired, while on UN or indeed peacekeeping service, has been overrun twice by hostile forces. On both occasions, his actions were seen to merit a decoration, in one case a SC, and in the other, a Meritorious Service Cross (MSC). Not surprisingly, his model of moral heroism is his legacy. Major-General Forand displayed old-style heroism, symbolized by physical courage in Cyprus. However, he demonstrated the special moral courage required of leaders in OOTW, whether on peace support operations in Yugoslavia or supporting domestic governments and agencies after natural disasters.

Major-General Forand has clearly made public his admiration for those who serve in uniform. He saved the lives of UN soldiers through his sage policy of staying put and ensuring that the requisite resources were committed to making that possible through strong defensive works. In addition, there is no doubt that the UN presence in the 13 Croat villages in the midst of the collapse of the Krajina Serb Republic saved the Croats who had dared to remain in the breakaway Croatian Serb entity from the retaliatory violence of fleeing Serbs. Furthermore, as noted in his MSC citation,[51] at least 700 Serb civilians owe their lives to Major-General Forand's decisions: first to protect them in his headquarters compound against advice; then to continue to protect them in the face of pressure to turn them over to the Croatians led by commanders who were later indicted for war crimes; and finally, to ensure that they were sent to safety in Serb-held areas.

Forand's moral courage extended beyond the war zone. When confronted by yet more challenges to do the right thing without recourse to superiors, he again rose to the occasion and mobilized the military resources that he controlled in Quebec *before* the government of that province actually made a request, either verbally or formally. His prompt action once again had a positive impact on civilian lives. Moreover, had there been a Y2K crisis, there is little doubt that Forand would have been the right leader to decide what to do without waiting for the direction that would have been so time-consuming in view of the inter-governmental jurisdictions in place.[52]

In peace support operations or in domestic operations, both of which are fraught with politics, it is important to have courageous moral leadership at the highest levels. Individuals in command must be prepared to do what is right, not what is good for their

Photographer Corporal John Bradley, CFJIC, KA2004-R103

Major-General Alain Forand (ret'd), the Colonel Commandant of the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps, speaks with soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment at Camp Julien in Kabul, Afghanistan.

career. Major-General Alain Forand is just such a leader. He serves as an example of the heroic leadership that will be required in military operations in the years ahead.

Endnotes

1 Sir John Keegan, *The Mask of Command: A Study of Generalship* (London: Pimilico, 1999), 311.

2 Ibid., 351.

3 On the importance of personality in OOTW, see the author's contribution on Colonel George Oehring in this book. The definition of OOTW is contained in the most current edition of the manual on CF operations, B-CG-005-004/AF-000. Morals are probably impossible to separate from personality. Indeed, Carol Off goes further as she argues that it is "impossible to evaluate performance as a leader except by examining it against the moral principles and ethics that guided him in his decisions." See Carol Off, "Do The Right Thing! Lieutenant-General Dallaire in the 1990s," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Warrior Chiefs* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2001), 335.

4 Hal Klepak, "Some Reflections on Generalship through the Ages," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 35. Klepak discusses a kind of courage "which has those higher headquarters (and politicians) being told what they must hear rather than what they want to hear." He goes on to state that "no modern commander can fail to recognize the daily requirement for this sort of courage," a sort that I argue that Forand had "in spades."

5 Ibid., 35. Operation Storm is the name given to the Croat attacks on Sectors North and South launched on 4 August 1995.

6 www.gg.ca

7 Transcript of testimony of Major-General Forand given before the Croatia Board of Inquiry, 25 November 1999, obtained on-line at www.dnd.ca/boi/ on 19 October 2000. See also, the chapter on Oehring in this book for earlier background.

8 UN, *The Blue Helmets* (New York: UN Department of Peacekeeping), 520.

9 Forand inquiry testimony. My personal observations at the April 1994 meeting between the Bosnian Government leaders and Bosnian Serbs were that attempts to expand a cease-fire at Gorazde into a Bosnia-wide truce

floundered on the fear of cease-fire lines hardening into political boundaries, such as had happened in Cyprus. There were no cease-fires either immediately at Gorazde in April 1994 until the Bosnian Serbs had achieved most of their military objectives or subsequently for a year-and-a-half in the case of all of Bosnia.

10 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 520, and Forand inquiry testimony.

11 P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 126-127.

12 James Gow, *The Serbian Project and Its Adversaries: A Strategy of War Crimes* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 171.

13 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 548, and Forand inquiry testimony.

14 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 549-550.

15 Major-General Forand's appointment in Sector South, like so many on peace support operations, involved assuming responsibility for people that the commander could not direct. As he recalled, "I had no operational control over any of these organizations and could not give them any order or direction even though I had sole responsibility for their security and implementation of the cease-fire agreements." See Forand inquiry testimony.

16 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 550.

17 Ibid., 551, and Forand inquiry testimony.

18 The early warning from the Canadian Zagreb diplomats to the Canadian battalion enabled that unit to send a liaison officer to the Croatian Army headquarters in Zadar before the Croatian assault, a move that Major-General Forand said paid dividends in the weeks ahead. See Forand inquiry testimony.

19 Ibid.

20 Major-General A.R. Forand's presentation to the Conference on Ethics, 24-25 October 1996, in *The Many Faces of Ethics in Defence: Proceedings of the Conference on Ethics in Canadian Defence* (Ottawa: Defence Ethics Program, 1997), 32.

21 Forand inquiry testimony.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 As reported by then-Colonel Andrew Leslie who was Major-General Forand's chief of staff (COS) until moved to become COS of UNCRO on 10 August. Telephone interview, 22 March 2005.

26 Forand inquiry testimony regarding the deterrent effect of NATO air power. See also, Tim Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force* (Lancaster:

Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, 1999) for details on NATO air war planning. Operation Deliberate Force was the name given to the NATO (primarily American) air strikes against Serb (mainly Bosnian Serb) targets prior to the Dayton Accords.

27 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 753, and Forand inquiry testimony. Both sources state that there were a total of 16 military fatalities during the short-lived history of UNCRO's mission, 31 March 1995 to 15 January 1996.

28 Forand's ethics presentation, 32. It should be added that Forand added in his inquiry testimony that he also provided, on request of the local Croatian Serb authorities, fuel to the Croatian Serbs fleeing the advance of the Croatian Army.

29 Ibid.

30 Major-General Forand estimated that only 2,000 of 80,000 Croatian Serbs remained in Sector South at the conclusion of Operation Storm. See Forand inquiry testimony.

31 Major-General Forand's UN soldiers had already transported wounded Croatian Serbs from the village of Kistanje to medical help. Now-Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie was personally involved in the transfer of patients and wounded from the Knin hospital to Forand's HQ compound and described the trip as traversing a combat zone. Teleconference with Leslie.

32 International War Crimes Tribunal, The Hague, Indictment IT-03-73.

33 Forand inquiry testimony.

34 Ibid. In his interview, Lieutenant-General Leslie mentioned the visit of the Secretary-General's Special Representative and the Deputy Force Commander for UNPROFOR, the umbrella organization directing and coordinating the efforts of all the newly minted (March 1995) UN organizations, such as UNCRO, to the Former Yugoslavia shortly after the Croats seized Knin. In this discussion, he acknowledged comments being made to Major-General Forand suggesting that his shelter of these Serb refugees was not in UNCRO or UNPROFOR interests, to which Forand responded vigorously, maintaining that he would not just turn over these civilians at someone's direction to a suspect fate. It is an interesting ethical question: when can one turn over suspected war criminals to suspected war criminals for justice?

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Then-Colonel Leslie, in his appointment as COS of the entire UNCRO force after 10 August, was able to use the example of Major-General Forand's closing down of Sector South to embarrass commanders and staff

in Sectors North and West, as well as his own HQ, in reducing the strength of what were now irrelevant UN troop dispositions. Teleconference with Leslie.

38 UN, *Blue Helmets*, 743, and Forand inquiry testimony both note that 3,100 troops were still on strength of UNCRO at the final close-down, down from a May 1995 maximum of 14,663.

39 Appendix 1 to Annex A 3301-2-2-3 (J3 Lessons Learned), June 1998. Civilian DND employees are not included in the totals of this document.

40 Ibid.

41 Alain Forand in Mark Abley, ed., *Stories From the Ice Storm* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 298.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., 299.

44 Ibid., 300. Major-General Forand pays tribute to the CDS in NDHQ who supported his decisions made in advance of formal provincial requests for help.

45 Ibid. and "Operation Assistance Lessons Learned," *Despatches*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (January 1998), 23-24.

46 Abley, *Stories From the Ice Storm,* 300-301. Lieutenant-General Leslie further expanded on Forand's position. Then-Brigadier-General Leslie himself brought his 1 CMBG to Quebec from Western Canada on 10 January 1998. Leslie said that Forand did not want soldiers reduced to clearing the rubbish of the Ice Storm's aftermath. Troops were not to be misemployed, doing something for free which commercial organizations or citizens could easily do for themselves. Such a position is also a dimension of the special courage that Klepak mentioned.

47 For example, the students of Canadian Forces College Joint Reserve Command and Staff College Course 9 studied the Manitoba Floods and Operation Assistance in their domestic operations segment, although this operation involved fewer troops and fewer provinces, indeed only one. Major-General Forand, as noted by Leslie, gained the trust and respect of all the individuals who made decisions for the many organizations and levels of government who had a part, or thought that they had a part, to play in the delivery of humanitarian assistance in January and February 1998.

48 Douglas Bland, "Military Command in Canada," in Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris, eds., *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines: Vanwell, 2001), 132.

49 Forand's ethics presentation.

50 See, for example, Major-General (ret'd) A.R. Forand, "The Canadian

Infantryman-Who they really are...The best!," available at www.ducimus.com, as accessed on 29 March 2005. See also, Major-General Alain Forand, "I am Proud To Be in The Military," *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November 1998), 1-2.

51 www.gg.ca

52 The author served as an operations liaison officer for Major-General Forand and other government agencies involved in preparing for the advent of the new Millennium.

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GLOSSARY

AFC	Air Force Cross
AFHQ	Air Force Headquarters
AOC	Air Officer Commanding
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
BCATP	British Commonwealth Air Training Plan
BCE	Balanced Command Envelope
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
Bn	Battalion
BR	Bomber Reconnaissance
CAFM	Canadian Airborne Forces Museum
CANBAT	Canadian Battalion
CAR	Competency, Authority, Responsibility
CAS	Chief of the Air Staff
CDQ	Canadian Defence Quarterly
CDS	Chief of the Defence Staff
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CF	Canadian Forces
CFLI	Canadian Forces Leadership Institute
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CinCCC	Commander-in-Chief Coastal Command
CMBG	Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group
CMH	Canadian Military History
CMHQ	Canadian Military Headquarters
CO	Commanding Officer

COS	Chief of Staff
Coy	Company
CT	Communication Trench
DCDS	Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff
DFC	Distinguished Flying Cross
DFM	Distinguished Flying Medal
DHH	Directorate of History and Heritage
DND	Department of National Defence
DRDC	Defence Research and Development Canada
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
EAC	Eastern Air Command
F/L	Flight Lieutenant
F/O	Flying Officer
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HF/DF	High Frequency Direction Finding
HMS	His / Her Majesty's Ship
HQ	Headquarters
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
LMF	Lack of Moral Fibre
MC	Military Cross
MG	Manuscript Group
MP	Military Police
MSC	Meritorious Service Cross
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NCPG	National Contingency Planning Group
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NS	Nova Scotia
OC	Officer Commanding
OIC	Operational Intelligence Centre
OOTW	Operations Other Than War
OP	Observation Post
OR	Other Ranks
ORB	Operational Records Book
ORS	Operational Research Section
P/O	Pilot Officer
PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry
PRO	Public Records Office
PW	Prisoner of War
R22eR	Royal 22^{e} Regiment
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCHA	Royal Canadian Horse Artillery
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
Ret'd	Retired
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
RG	Record Group
RMC	Royal Military College of Canada
RN	Royal Navy
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RSK	Serb Republic of the Krajina
S/L	Squadron Leader
SC	Star of Courage
UBC	University of British Columbia
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

UNCIVPOL	United Nations Civilian Police
UNCRO	United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNMO	United Nations Military Observer
UNPA	United Nations Protected Area
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States
USN	United States Navy
UTP	University of Toronto Press
VC	Victoria Cross
VCGS	Vice Chief of the General Staff
W/C	Wing Commander
WO	War Office
Y2K	Year 2000
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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