

Commission of Inquiry  
into the Deployment of  
Canadian Forces to Somalia



Commission d'enquête  
sur le déploiement des  
Forces canadiennes en Somalie

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# The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia A Socio-cultural Inquiry

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a study prepared for  
the Commission  
of Inquiry into  
the Deployment of  
Canadian Forces  
to Somalia

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Donna Winslow



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in Somalia**



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## *Acknowledgements*

When the Right Honourable Kim Campbell stated that the first Board of Inquiry into the "Somalia Affair," as it has come to be known in the media, was going to look into "cultural attitudes," it was probably a polite way of saying "racism." I doubt she had in mind anything approaching the scope of this study which examines, not racism, but culture — military culture and particularly the Canadian Airborne Regiment's culture.

At the time the Right Honourable Campbell was making her statements, I was probably off in some remote part of the globe doing what anthropologists love to do — studying someone else's culture. Much of my work has been focused on nationalism and ethnic identity, yet over the years I have been critical of the type of anthropology that studies only the "sardines" of life rather than the "sharks," believing that it is as important to examine the cultural workings of powerful institutions of developed states as it is to study indigenous peoples who live on their periphery. Well, this research has been my chance to do this. It has also been an opportunity for me to apply theories of identity formation to a very particular form of "tribe" in modern society — the military.

One cannot undertake a study of this magnitude without incurring many debts of gratitude along the way. I have to begin my "thank yous" with the Commission of Inquiry itself: Stanley Cohen for believing that work on Airborne culture was both relevant and important to the Commissioners' deliberations; Chairman Létourneau and Commissioners Rutherford and Desbarats for listening to what I had to say with open minds; technical experts LCol (ret) Doug Bland, Col (ret) Ted Nurse, and Gen (ret) Jack Vance, for sharing information and experience; Gerry Braun, Glenn Gilmour, David Goetz, Eric Myles and Janice Tokar for listening to me talk through some of my ideas. Many thanks also go to the research staff at the Commission particularly David Pomerant and his assistant Kim Lutes for their constant assistance and advice; Linda Cameron for helping



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The usual caveat that the author alone accepts responsibility for the interpretations and conclusions is particularly relevant in this study, since undoubtedly, there will be considerable disagreement with what I am about to say about the Canadian military. I derive some comfort from the words of the famous French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1979) who once said: "in a complex analysis, people retain the aspect which disturbs them the least."

## *Introduction*

*When I hear the word gun, I reach for my culture.*

Alexander Gerschenkron (quoted in Dumont 1986: 158)

Henri Poincaré<sup>1</sup> pointed out, at the turn of the century, that if a phenomenon has one explanation, it will also admit a certain number of other explanations, each as capable as the first one of elucidating the nature of the phenomenon in question. This research examines one possible socio-cultural explanation for the events which took place in Somalia in the first quarter of 1993. To that end, it asks to what extent military culture and particularly the culture of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) affected the behaviour of Canadian soldiers in Somalia. In this instance, culture refers to values that are shared by the people in a group and that tend to persist over time even when group membership changes. Culture also “represents the behavior patterns or style of an organization that new employees are automatically encouraged to follow” (Kotter and Heskett 1992: 4). We will apply our definition of culture to the Canadian military as an organization which is distinctive, has clear boundaries and can be studied as a unit within the total social system (Parmar 1994: 66). As a sociological category, the term “military” is defined according to the *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*:

Military organizations are structures for the co-ordination of activities meant to ensure victory on the battlefield. In modern times these structures have increasingly taken the form of a permanent establishment maintained in peace time for the eventuality of armed conflict and managed by a professional military...i.e.[with members] who pursue a lifetime occupational career of service in the armed forces (quoted in Parmar 1994: 22-23).

According to Ott (1989) in order to discover the underlying assumptions of an organization's culture, non-quantitative tools should be used. Specifically, he suggests participant observation and interviewing by a

clinical outsider with key informants as methods of choice for determining a culture's basic assumptions (see Parker 1995: 29). This study of the Canadian Airborne Regiment can be situated squarely in the qualitative tradition, where the reasoning guiding data collection and analysis is inductive and is based on an exploratory research process. That is, key information is revealed and insights occur continuously throughout the research process. It is only in the last analysis that the pieces of the puzzle finally fall into place in research using qualitative methods. As Charles Moskos, the well-known American military sociologist, has said, there are two traditions in military sociology, simply described as quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The quantitative tradition relies on surveys or experimental settings for its data. The qualitative tradition looks toward participant observations, case studies, and comparisons across time and countries. Quantitativists typically seek to specify variables in hypothesis form; then they seek to test the resultant hypotheses. Qualitativists are more likely to discern variables in a holistic context; then they use these variables to generate hypotheses (Moskos 1988).

Qualitative approaches are also characterized by the desire to seek closeness with the lives of particular individuals by emphasis on the notion of *verstehen* (a more intimate and empathetic understanding of phenomena in terms of the meaning given to it by the subject) as the criterion of understanding, and by the adoption of a constructionist rather than a realist stance regarding truth. The inductive perspective is characterized by the belief that research should begin with observation. Insight will then emerge from the data collection. One observes/interviews, induces generalizations and, through a process of analytical induction, attempts to develop a full-blown analysis that reflects adequately the observed reality. For example, the distinctive nature of each of the Airborne commandos (see Chapter 4) appeared significant only after it emerged as a theme in several interviews.

A qualitative approach, therefore, implies the accumulation of information and data from persons directly involved in the situation under scientific investigation. This approach leads to a detailed description of events, situations, people and the interactions among them. The interpretations and analysis in this study are based on over 50 in-depth interviews in addition to several focus groups held with military personnel from a variety of rank levels and with some of their families. Interviewees were selected



randomly and through snowball word of mouth, that is, if a soldier suggested that I should speak to “so and so,” I usually followed up on it. Interviews were conducted almost exclusively with former Airborne soldiers and military personnel who deployed to Somalia although several were conducted with people who had been involved with the Airborne but not deployed to Somalia.

Informants were told that the interview was entirely confidential and voluntary, that I was working on a report for the Commission on military culture and that I was not interested in discovering “who did what” in Somalia. Interviews lasted a minimum of one hour with most being between two and six hours each. Ninety percent of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed; during the other 10 percent, I took detailed notes. The interviews themselves were completely unstructured starting off with just a few basic questions such as: “What’s the first thing you remember about Somalia? Why did you join the Airborne?” Once soldiers began to talk, it was almost impossible to get a word in edgewise. For most, Somalia and its aftermath, that is, the disbanding of the CAR, is a very emotional issue, and informants had much to say about it. After the interview, I invited the participants to contact me again if there was anything else they thought of and more than a few took me up on it. Therefore, some of the interviews took place in stages i.e., two or three hours over a period of time.

Most interviews were held on Canadian Forces bases across the country, but some were held in my office at the University of Ottawa, in cafés and even in soldiers’ homes so I might meet and talk with their families. Quotations from these interviews appear in this study. However, they were altered to conceal the identity of the interviewees. For example, French was translated into English and the vocabulary was “levelled” so officers could not be distinguished from enlisted men, nor men from women, and from this point on, I will refer to all interviewees as male and soldier. To ensure fidelity in the changes, a copy of the altered quotation was then sent back to the interviewee so he could check that I had, in fact, captured the sense of his statements. In order to distinguish the words of my informants from the words of others, in this text their words will appear in italics. It is important to remember that these are their words, their impressions of Somalia and as such do not represent the author’s opinions or beliefs as to what actually occurred overseas and in Canada. However, if they are in the text it is because they are representative of what came up

in many interviews. Often, the statements of my interviewees are not only an example of the general tone of my interviews but also of testimony to the military Board of Inquiry which was subjected to a general content analysis during which key information was searched for, such as the definitions of elite soldier, attitudes toward Somalis, attitudes toward other commando units, etc.

In looking to establish the Canadian military and Airborne culture/identity, I arrived at a conceptual scheme derived by means of inductive generalizations from two types of data: 1) visual and literary sources: because I was not able to carry out participant observation, I have resorted to documentary research using a variety of visual records (photos, video tapes), personal records (letters and first-hand accounts of soldiers while in training) in addition to literary sources on the Canadian military, Airborne and similar elite units<sup>2</sup>; and 2) directly observed behaviour of a particular kind: generalizations enunciated about the Canadian military and the Airborne by informants acting as "self-ethnographers." This information was obtained through the open-ended unstructured interviews described above.

To understand what happened in Somalia, I again resorted to the use of visual records (photos and video tapes taken in Somalia), personal records (letters written home by soldiers and first hand accounts written from Somalia by journalists), official documents (court-martial proceedings, for example), in addition to studies done on the American units in Somalia and on Canadian peacekeeping operations elsewhere. A wealth of information was also obtained through the open-ended, unstructured interviews carried out with military personnel deployed to Somalia. These interviews are coloured by the passage of time and the media attention focused on the Airborne. Nevertheless, it is my belief that they still provide us with empirical data which is of considerable value.

The theoretical framework for this study has been inspired by Georges Devereux's<sup>3</sup> work on identity formation. His essential assumption was that any human phenomenon can and must be fully explained in both psychological and anthropological-sociological terms, and that these two types of discourse stand in a strictly complementary relationship to each other:

The behaviour of an individual, when seen as an individual, and not in terms of his membership in human society, is understandable only in a specifically

psychological frame of reference and in terms of psychological laws.... The behaviour of a group, seen as a group and not primarily as an aggregate of discrete individuals, is understandable only in terms of a specific sociologicistic frame of reference and in terms of socio-cultural laws (Devereux 1978: 117).

For example, the murder of Shidane Arone was committed by an individual yet it also occurred in the context of a Canadian peace-making operation. When one observes an individual, that which for a psychologist is "inside" becomes "outside" to the sociologist/anthropologist who considers the individual as a member of the ensemble to which he belongs (in this case 2 Commando of the CAR). While recognizing that there exists a complementary relationship between the psychological (individual motivation) explanation for the torture/murder of Shidane Arone, we have concentrated on the socio-cultural explanation for the same phenomenon. As the psychiatrist and popular writer M. Scott Peck (1983: 215) has pointed out, in the final analysis, "every single human act is ultimately the result of an individual choice." Nevertheless, the question remains as to what guides and informs this choice. To a member of the Canadian public over 7,000 miles away, the choice to beat and torture a prisoner seems evil, but what was the context in which this action occurred? Can this action be examined as part of a larger whole, as part of a series of events which began long before the CAR left for Somalia? After 50+ interviews and thousands of pages of reading, I have come to believe that the events which occurred in Somalia in the first quarter of 1993 reflect:

- the contradictions present in the Canadian military establishment due to the tension between the traditional (combat) paradigm and the modern (bureaucratic/occupational) paradigm;
- the cultural predisposition of the CAR combat unit (the assumptions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings that were patterned through CAR socialization) which promoted an inclusive and invested CAR identity;
- the organization of the unit so subcultures arose due to the fact that officers rotated in and out while non-commissioned members (NCMs) tended to stay (creating a non-commissioned member subculture and parallel authority system); and due to the maintenance of three distinct and autonomous commandos (each with its own particular subculture); and
- the situational contingencies that arose from the external environment (lack of preparedness, African climate, organization of the unit in theatre, nature of interactions with the local population).



This report is organized into sections which reflect these four factors. The first section describes the military as a "distinct society," yet one that is conditioned and increasingly influenced by trends in the larger Canadian civilian society. This is done in order to situate the Canadian Airborne Regiment in the context of the Canadian Forces in order to understand how the CAR — or parts of it — was on a divergent and perhaps deviant course.

The military in Canada sees itself as a corporate body distinct from lay men and women. Although an integral part of Canadian society, the military perceives itself as "a distinct sub-set of the Canadian fabric." This is clearly stated in the Canadian Forces' military ethos (DND 1994b: ii-iii). This separateness is underlined through the military's distinctive dress, (distinctive badges, buttons, colours, uniform, haircut, headgear, etc.) language (unique terminology and use of acronyms) and an emphasis on ceremony and tradition (parades, mess dinners, troopings, etc). The distinct corporate nature of the military is also established by its distinct culture, which includes its hierarchical system, the army's regimental organization and the navy's divisional system, formal and informal associations, customs and traditions.

However, the increasing "civilianization" of the Canadian Forces has created tension and paradox in the military as traditional institutional values (often associated with combat roles) have come into conflict with new individualist and occupational values (often associated with managerial responsibilities). The new occupational values are thought to have emerged due to increasing job specialization, a decline in the perceived importance of the combat arms, the introduction into the military of civilian management principles and bureaucratic rationalization. This was true of the Canadian Forces after unification in 1968 but it became a significant concern after the amalgamation of the headquarters of the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence in 1972. Thus, the traditional perception of military service as a calling or vocation, legitimated by broadly based national values, has given way to a subjective definition of military service as an occupation in the labour market, involving the performance of work for civilian types of rewards under specified contractual conditions (Cotton, 1988: 41).

The post World War II Canadian military has also been affected by "bureaucratization." This is related to the maintenance of the army during peace times in a Cold War climate. According to Soeters (1995: 6) "armies

in peacetime are highly bureaucratic, including a tall hierarchy, [and] an elaborated command structure.” In Canada it also had to do with the decline in actual combat operations.<sup>4</sup> In the CF, the majority of enlisted personnel are engaged in technical and administrative roles rather than in purely military endeavours. Bureaucratization is seen by some traditionalists as a threat to the military’s separateness and some military men fear the erosion of the warrior ethos of leadership and its replacement with managerial principles (Gabriel 1982: 98). Officers are thus in danger of becoming mere managers of human and material resources as military socialization shifts incrementally toward the managerial. This leads to a dichotomy between two sets of skills and attitudes: the heroic qualities of loyalty, unity obedience, hardiness and zeal versus the managerial which is oriented toward coping with the larger political, financial and technological environment (Wamsley 1972: 400-402).

The next section considers military and army culture. The Canadian army reflects the geographic and linguistic divisions in Canada in its regimental divisions: western Anglophone (PPCLI - Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry), central and eastern Anglophone (RCR - The Royal Canadian Regiment), and central Francophone (R22eR - called in English “Van Doos”). This territorial base defines areas of recruitment, training and residence for regimental members. The regimental subculture is a common bond designed to unite its members. “The regimental system forms a strong subculture within the CF that is a pervasive and often unforgiving milieu within which all combat arms and most other army personnel live their daily lives” (DND 1996a). Horizontal stress thus occurs in the army from the geographic and cultural (French–English) separation of the Canadian army into three regiments — western Anglophone, central and eastern Anglophone and central Francophone. Vertical stress occurs as a result of the division between non-commissioned officers, and NCMs and within each regiment, there is a horizontal infrastructure of messes which reinforces this separation.

We will see that some aspects of army socialization emphasize the “warrior.” While many soldiers do not necessarily buy into this mind set, seeing their life in the army as simply another, albeit special, kind of job, the warrior image does appeal to some men, particularly those who might be attracted to units such as the CAR. The goal of this discussion is to show how an individual can, through self-selection and training, become increasingly “invested” in a series of nested identities leading from military to army regiment to CAR.

Like a Russian doll, we continue opening layers to arrive at the CAR, a unit with a distinct combat orientation, tradition and subculture in the armed forces. The Airborne, like the army, suffered from both horizontal and vertical pressures. It was divided into three commandos, reflecting the three feeder regiments, each with a distinct “personality” and each operating relatively autonomously. Even though many officers enjoyed a special form of closeness with their men in the regiment, the CAR was also divided between NCMs and officers, due to the fact that officers rotated rather quickly in and out of the unit while the NCMs stayed on, sometimes for several tours of duty.

The following section explains the Somalian environment, that is, the physical, social and cultural context that the CAR faced when it arrived in 1993. In Belet Huen, it was confronted with a complex array of clans, shifting clan alliances and clan-based claims on political authority and economic assets. Peeling off another layer, we describe the unit in Somalia where all the contradictions played themselves out “in theatre” 7,000 miles from home, where soldiers found themselves in a highly charged and stressful situation.

Finally, it is important to remember that the events which took place in Somalia do not belong, in themselves, to the domain of psychology, criminology, sociology nor anthropology. It is only through their explanation within the framework of one of these sciences that they become transformed into a psychological or sociological phenomenon (Devereux 1978: 5, 11). For the people who lived them, these events were a total experience — one they are still trying to make sense of today.





On duty in Somalia



## *The Military*

*Sometimes people ask me what airline I work for.*  
Female officer in the CF

In this chapter we examine military culture in general and look at what makes it distinct from civilian society, although most of our examples are drawn from the army since it is from Canadian army regiments that the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) was drawn. Recent studies of the Canadian Forces (CF) (Cotton 1979, Cotton and Pinch 1986, Parker 1995) have argued that the culture of the CF has been moving along a continuum since the end of World War II from an institutional perspective to an occupational one. These changes are not linear or chronological nor are they homogeneous across the CF. Thus, the tensions and contradictions of these sometimes opposing perspectives can be felt across the Canadian military establishment. This section discusses these institutional and occupational trends, describing the increasing "civilianization" of the CF. This is done to situate the CAR in the CF. If culture is a reflection of the way an organization "does business," then we can see that certain sectors of the CF have begun to do business like any other corporation or bureaucracy in Canadian society. Meanwhile, certain sections of the CF (such as the combat arms) have continued to do business along traditional lines. Thus, while the mainstream of the CF was becoming increasingly "civilianized" the combat arms and, particularly the CAR, remained anchored in more institutional values.

### THE MILITARY AS TOTAL INSTITUTION

"The Canadian Forces is at once an agency of the state and a distinct group, separate and professionally autonomous with its own body of law, regulations customs and traditions and ethos" (Grimshaw 1995: 2). In this statement Grimshaw is describing the CF in terms which characterize it as



“total institution,” a concept developed by Erving Goffman in the 1960s. Total institutions have several defining characteristics.

- All aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority.
- Each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together.
- All phases of the day’s activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials.
- The various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aim of the institution.
- There is a sharp split between the supervisors and the members, with social mobility between the two groups highly restricted.
- Information concerning the member is often withheld from him.
- The work structure in the total institution, geared as it is to a 24-hour day, demands different motives for work than exist in the society at large.
- There are usually real or symbolic barriers indicating a break with the society “out there.”

This description can be applied to the CAR during its time at Base Petawawa and during its deployment to Somalia. While this is examined in detail in Chapter 4, we briefly note that all aspects of the CAR soldier’s working life occurred on a base either in Petawawa or on training exercises on other bases. This was true for his non-working life as well if he lived in military housing alone or with his family. This is particularly true for soldiers on missions overseas who live in camps with other soldiers.

Members of the CF are subject to Canadian military laws and justice. As one of our interviewees noted, this does set the military apart. *The military certainly sees itself as different from civilian society. It has its own justice system and its own way of doing things. Contemptuous towards civilians. If you’re a civilian, you’re not one of us.* On an overseas mission, it is the military authorities of the sending state, not those of the host country, which exercise jurisdiction over soldiers.<sup>1</sup> The soldiers and officers on a base spend their days in the company of others just like them. Again, this is more true for missions overseas where soldiers are often dis-

couraged from contact with non-military. As in most other jobs, a soldier's day is oriented to accomplishing a series of tasks set to him by the organization, and his daily routine is even more tightly controlled in operations overseas.

In the military, soldiers and officers find themselves in an orderly structure which determines who they are and what they do in addition to what their obligations to others are. Officers set the tasks to be accomplished, and work is ordered through the chain of command. Soldiers execute orders. *Like they say, an NCM [non-commissioned member] digs a hole and fills it up after he's finished with it. An officer will order you to dig a hole but he will use it for himself. He doesn't dig the hole, just gives the order to dig the hole.* There is a clear distinction between soldiers and officers. This separation is maintained through the military hierarchy and is even maintained informally, i.e., they rarely socialize with each other. Although not impossible, it is difficult to pierce through the promotion ceiling and move from soldier to officer during a career. I was told that this promotion barrier was a "glass ceiling."

*In the military which is basically conservative you cannot step past that barrier. The only time you have a chance to step over that barrier comes after 10 years in the forces or if you get a diploma. Then you will be allowed to go on to a commission. That means a transfer from non-commissioned officer to officer. That is the only way you can ask for a commission and go on as an officer.*

The overall goal of the military is to prepare for war. In short, soldiers are trained killers. On peace missions, the rules of engagement define the parameters of a soldier's actions determining when it is acceptable to shoot to kill. Soldiers are expected to be on 24-hour call because they serve a higher purpose — the nation. The CAR, as the United Nations (UN) standby unit, was expected to keep its fighting skills honed since it might be "called up" at any time. Also, soldiers are expected to respect values and norms which transcend individual self-interest in favour of a presumed higher goal. According to the statement on Canadian military ethos: "We accept that it is essential for all members to clearly display loyalty, first to the country then to the group, and finally to each member of the chain of command, both senior and junior to them before taking thought for themselves."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, one of my informants said, *In battle, an individual's interests, concerns and aspirations must be totally subservient to those of*

*the group*. Instilling this value into recruits is no longer a simple task since young people entering the CF are more educated and aware of their rights than ever before. According to the chief instructor of the Infantry School Combat Training Centre Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Galetown "There is more of the 'me' generation coming through at the junior ranks. We have to turn it around. We have to teach service over self."<sup>3</sup>

### *More Than Just a Job*

Cotton (1997: 6) tells us that "sacred" vs "profane" is a good description of how the military sees itself in relation to the larger Canadian society while Lang (1972: 47) writes "the military can be likened to a religious order; its members dedicate themselves to render service, not to God, but to the Nation." As Moskos (1986: 51) points out, members of an institution are often seen as following a calling.<sup>4</sup> Like a monastic order, the military is a vocation "similar to that of a priest" (Loomis and Lightburn 1980: 19). In the words of Reverend Arthur E. Gans, a retired major and former CF chaplain: "If the military is...a vocation, a calling, then, I believe it is fair to say that those who join must live at a higher standard than that expected by the outside society. They may even have to give up certain 'rights' which the civilian society enjoys."<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note Reverend Gans' view of civilian society as the "outside."

Along with the military "vocation" comes a hierarchical structure and set of values apart from those of civilian society:

Vital to combat operations and therefore a necessary part of traditional military professionalism is a set of values which are to some extent contrary to those held by liberal civilian society. Military organization is hierarchical, not egalitarian and is oriented to the group rather than to the individual; it stresses discipline and obedience, not freedom of expression; it depends on confidence and trust, not caveat emptor. It requires immediate decision and prompt action, not thorough analysis and extensive debate; it relies on training, simplification and predictable behaviour, not education, sophistication and empiricism. It offers austerity, not material comforts.<sup>6</sup>

As part of their employment contract, members of the CF operate under an "unlimited liability" clause.<sup>7</sup> The unlimited liability of the armed forces means that members of the CF must be prepared to risk their lives in order to complete a task derived from national goals, and expect to face an opponent also using deadly force. In my interviews, military men contin-



ually told me of the importance of “unlimited liability,” which ultimately sets military life apart from civilian life in Canada.<sup>8</sup> At any time a military person might be asked to make the “final sacrifice.”

To be an effective servant of the people the army must concentrate, not on the values of our liberal society, but on the values of the battlefield.... We must recognize that this military community differs from the civilian community from which it springs. The civilian community exists to promote the quality of life; the military community exists to fight and, if need be, to die in defense of that quality of life.<sup>9</sup>

In Canada, the dereliction, circumvention or avoidance of the unlimited liability clause can result in the application of drastic and powerful sanctions. For example, under the *National Defence Act*, acts of treason, desertion and mutiny are crimes that are still liable to capital punishment (Parker 1995: 57).<sup>10</sup> These sanctions are enforced by another aspect of the institution — a separate justice, law enforcement and prison system. According to Kadish (1983: 1051), military law provides an additional social control of its members, enforced by a separate criminal justice and judicial apparatus. Although all Canadians are subject to one Constitution and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the military justice system is a special and separate body of extra regulations, procedures and punishments that apply only to military personnel (Bercuson, 1996: 84).

When military men are telling me that they can be asked to lay their life down for their country, they are also saying that they will be asked to kill for their country. As Lewis (1985) tells us in his study of the U.S. military, the ability of this total institution to invert meanings attached to particular behaviour is crucial to the fashioning of an end product: a trained killer. For most Americans who are socialized into believing that life is sacred, such a systematic inversion of meaning is only possible in a total institution. “In a total institution the notion of the sanctity of life can be continuously drained of meaning” (Lewis 1985: 53). Similarly Cockerham and Cohen (1980) state that what most distinguishes the military is that it must train and socialize its membership to norms that are non-normative in civilian society, such as kill people and obey orders implicitly. Interesting for this report is their conclusion that “whenever people are socialized to follow orders, there is the danger that they will suspend their own moral judgment especially when under great stress” (Cockerham and Cohen 1980: 1275).

The reason the military must lay claim over the lives of its members is the view known as the "mean world syndrome." In describing religious belief and practices around the world, the famous anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1966: 3) tells us that a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs. The world view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly well arranged to accommodate such a way of life. For the military, the vision of the world as a mean and dangerous place justifies its existence. The military views conflict as a universal pattern throughout nature and sees violence rooted in the permanent biological and psychological nature of humankind. According to this belief, human nature cannot be changed. Violence is permanent, therefore the need of the military is permanent.

The function of the armed forces is to insure the security and perpetuation of the state. Hence, in its role as protector of the country, the military assumes that there are some individuals, groups, organizations, and countries that have malevolent intentions toward Canada. Every soldier, if not every citizen, is duty-bound to resist such threats. Thus the military's view of society, of international relations, and of human nature tends to be somewhat pessimistic, emphasizing the violent, irrational character of humankind. In fulfilling its mandate of protection, the services must be prepared to undertake the ultimate form of violence, that is war (Parker 1995: 56).

Traditional, combat-oriented, military service has other institutional characteristics such as liability for 24-hour service. Members are often expected to perform duties not limited to their specialties. So, for example, in Somalia, medical personnel were asked to perform guard duty. The member is also subject to military discipline and law. There is an inability to strike or collectively negotiate working conditions. When grievances are felt, redress takes the form of personal recourse to superiors rather than formal collective action. Military members in Canada do not belong to unions, there is no mechanism for collective dissent. For example, they are not allowed to sign petitions complaining of unjust working conditions. An individual who feels unfairly treated may register an after-the-fact protest called a redress of grievance.<sup>11</sup>

Until recently, there was also a paternalistic remuneration system in military institutions, e.g., in kind, food, housing, uniforms, medical care and subsidized base consumer goods including alcohol. This was also the case for missions overseas.

*On deployment, everything becomes very cheap because you get it without the taxes on it. In the old days, liquor would cost 10 cents and when you have dollars in your pockets, the tendency is to buy rounds for your friends and all that, and pretty soon it tends to lead to a pretty nice drunken bash. Now I go back 10-12 years there, late 70s to early 80s. Since then there have been changes in regulations to ensure a reasonable approach to alcohol, in the sense that messes can not subsidize the sale of alcohol any more, as it was in the past. Happy hours, two for ones, that kind of thing are no longer permitted. We can not do that in the forces, and I believe that similar regulations apply to deployments. But your starting cost is lower like what a bottle costs when you go to a duty free versus when you go get it downtown. Well soldiers on deployment get all their stuff, cigarettes, beer and alcohol duty free.*

The CF still provides members with forms of paternalistic remuneration such as medical specialists and subsidized base consumer facilities. In this way, the military still tries to look after its own.

We are a society unto ourselves, and we do what we want. I don't have to go to a civilian doctor, dentist, lawyer or...You know what I am saying? Everything I need is in the Armed Forces; therefore I think of nothing outside.<sup>12</sup>

*One of our colonels once said that we were a micro-society, a self sufficient system. We create, buy, sell, work, make food, make children, heal people. We are in a world apart, one ideology, the same principles. We are so self-sufficient, it's like nothing else exists. It's like "If this group didn't exist, what would I do, where would I go?" It's as though the world were flat, and at the edge of this world there's nothing but a huge waterfall.*

### *Hierarchy*

The CF is organized vertically as a hierarchical organization broken into ranks. "In armed service everyone finds and acknowledges for himself (or herself) a definite place in an orderly structure in which all know who and what they are and what their obligations are in relation to others, whether colleagues and equals, subordinates or superiors" (Hackett 1986: 9). Vertical identification means that one acquires an understanding and sense of responsibility for the performance of the whole and, ideally, a respect for those above and below in the hierarchy. An example of policy reflecting these traditional institutional values is the Canadian military ethos which has been defined as follows:



We believe in Canada as a strong and free nation, and accept that the ultimate reason for the existence of the Canadian Armed Forces is the preservation of secure justice and peace for Canada. We believe that this can best be attained through the development and maintenance of a professional military force.

We believe this profession of arms, an integral part of Canadian society, forms a distinct sub-set of the entire Canadian fabric. We are a group who have been charged with a unique mandate: to serve our country through the maintenance of its security and defence of its sovereignty; if necessary, by the application of military forces.

We accept that the authority to apply such power requires that our profession be properly structured with adherence to a clearly defined chain of command and obedience to a code of conduct, in our case: the Code of Service Discipline.

We believe that the military society is a good society embodying those moral virtues, which affect our relations with our comrades in arms and our own selves, of: prudence, justice, patriotism, obedience, veracity and patience. We believe that these values, derived from a traditional code of ethics, form part of those of contemporary Canadian society.

We accept that it is essential for all members to clearly display loyalty, first to the country then to the group, and finally to each member of the chain of command, both senior and junior to them before taking thought of themselves.

We accept that teamwork is essential to the survival and success of the military unit and therefore accept the necessity of continuous cycles of training and practice. This ensures not only that the group functions as a disciplined and professional entity, but also that individual members are trained to perform well, both in their assigned role and as members of the team, and that their potential for development as future leaders is recognized and nurtured.

We accept that in volunteering to serve our country we must endure the restriction of certain freedoms including some rights provided by democratic process.

We accept these responsibilities in memory of those comrades who died in the service of their country and must ensure that their memory and ideals are not forgotten.<sup>13</sup>

In his critique of this document Parker (1995: 60) points out that:

...the subordinating of the self to the team, the concepts of service and sacrifice, the moral justification for the existence of the military institution, and the need for loyalty to the country, one's comrades and the command structure are all examples of the values needed by the benevolent military patriarchy...the patriarchal system is based on an implicit, ideal contract between leaders and followers. In return for being submissive loyal and obedient, followers are assured a steady work situation (if not always safe, challenging or agreeable), a clear (if seldom flexible) hierarchical structure with precise rules for personal conduct and interpersonal relations, a commitment by the organization to provide (if not evenly distribute) the necessities, and a sense of service to a greater (if not always defined) good.

In the Oath of Service, taken by each recruit, officer or enlisted man, the soldier swears allegiance to something larger than himself. According to Neill (nd: 14) this is "the first step in ethical socialization to the in-group — bringing the new recruit into a body of individuals drawn together by a common purpose and thus, a common bond, subordinating individualism to group identity, and therefore — theoretically — subordinating self-interest to the needs of the mission."

While the army places the emphasis on reinforcing unit bonding, team playing and supporting one's comrades, right or wrong, at the same time it also enforces a rigid system of hierarchy and privilege — more so than the other branches of the forces. This is important for us to understand since the separation between ranks seems to have been significant for the CAR unit. The biggest break occurs between NCMs and officers.<sup>14</sup> This fundamental "class" division is one of the characteristics of the Canadian army's regimental system which sets it apart from the U.S. Army.

It is said that the officers are the head and the men are the arms and the legs. Leaders are not elected democratically from within the group but are designated from above and deliberately cloaked in the symbols of authority. Obedience is the number one military discipline (Peck 1983: 224). According to Cotton and Pinch (1986: 233) CF officers and enlisted ranks "constitute two distinct segments of the force, socially distinguishable in such manifestation as separate messing arrangements, accoutrements, career paths, and terms of service".<sup>15</sup> Our interviewees were very conscious of this difference:

*There's a barrier between men and officers. You won't be able to ever pass that barrier. It's like the difference between an engineer and a technician. You can work with the engineer, you can reply to the engineer. But you have to use the word "sir." The engineer doesn't have to do that. Because of his education. Same thing with the forces. There's a barrier. That is what makes the difference between officers and non-officers.*

The purpose for the rigid ranking is combat. An officer cannot be close to men he might send to their death, and soldiers are not supposed to think about questioning an order which they might do if it were given by a "buddy." There are also differences between commissioned and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). While officers are responsible for the overall good conduct and order of their unit, the NCOs are responsible for the daily conduct of the men (Bercuson 1996: 112).

The officer's task is the command of his unit or sub-unit. He is responsible for policy and for devising plans to achieve the objectives with which he has been tasked. He must provide leadership to his men and is responsible for their well-being. He is also responsible for all the paperwork and administration of his unit. The NCO is responsible to his officer for the day-to-day running of the platoon, for discipline, for seeing that men are ready at the right place, at the right time, with the correct equipment to carry out the officer's plan. He is responsible for advising the officer on all matters pertaining to the men. He is the eyes and ears of the officer and is responsible for keeping the officer informed of issues to do with the morale, discipline and well-being of the soldiers. In this way, he acts as an intermediary between the men and the officer. He is also responsible for seeing that the officer's policies and commands are passed on to the men (Irwin 1993: 45-46).

The relationship between the officer and his NCO counterpart is one of checks and balance. In the army, for example, next to the commanding officer (CO), the regimental sergeant-major (RSM) has the greatest influence on the soldiers. He is also the CO's personal advisor on all matters that concern dress, deportment and discipline in the unit. Although he is concerned with the NCMs, the RSM also keeps a watchful eye on the officers. Nothing is beyond the RSM's purview which is why he is supposed to be the CO's most valued advisor. The NCOs, particularly the higher ranking ones, have a longer experience and are supposed to take the pulse of the unit. They can advise the officer not only technically but personal-



ly, e.g., by taking a young officer under wing while at the same time deferring to him as a senior officer in the chain of command.<sup>16</sup> This system of interdependence between officers and NCOs is very important for the good functioning of the unit. According to Irwin (1993: 186-187):

This team of officer and NCO is the ideal working relationship at every level of the organization. The officer/NCO relationship is the nexus between the officers and the men and as such, the quality of the relationship determines, in the sense of setting limits to, the success of the hierarchy generally. If the officer and NCO can work together to produce an impression to the men and to those higher up in the hierarchy, there is much less stress on the structure of the Battalion. In the words of one section commander "When the Platoon Commander and the Platoon Warrant aren't getting along, it's just that much harder to get the guys to do things". This cohesive, cooperative teamwork between officer and NCO is the critical factor in the cohesion and proper operation of the battalion as a whole.

Our interviews confirmed this.

*You have obviously your normal command structure that everybody accepts and understands. You also have an informal sort of chain that you will use. For example a commanding officer will rely on the advice of his RSM. The RSM has an in-depth knowledge of the NCOs and the other ranks, what the morale is like what the NCOs are concerned about, that type of thing. Likewise at a lower level: warrant officer, sergeant-major, RSM are not in the chain of command but they're there to assist and advise, to use the experience they have to assist the officers in commanding and doing their job. And in a good unit, the bonding between these people is very close. If you have a breakdown there and there's no communication and no trust, the chances are that the unit is going to be dysfunctional.*

The importance of this relationship should be kept in mind since we will see that, in the CAR and particularly during its deployment to Somalia, the relationship between officers and NCOs was strained, and this had an impact on the conduct of operations.

In the armed forces individual aspirations become subordinated to the needs of the total institution: "the function of military education is not mainly to provide the individual with an education, but rather to provide

the particular service with a man properly equipped to perform certain designated tasks" (Barber 1972: 154). Moreover, members are not compensated according to individual expertise but rather according to rank and seniority. This is a result of unification when lateral skill progression was abolished, and it has led to rank inflation since a soldier has to rise in rank in order to have an increase in pay. Bercuson (1996: 81) writes that "there are even more members in the higher ranks today than was the case a quarter century ago." In comparison, a civilian occupation is organized horizontally. People in a civilian occupation "tend to feel a sense of identity with others who do the same sort of work and who receive about the same pay." On the other hand, in an institution such as the military, "it is the organization in which people live and work which creates the sense of identity that binds them together" (Moskos 1986: 53).

In a total institutional environment, work and residence locales are adjacent and the institution organizes social activities for its members and their families (Moskos 1988: 61). Arkin and Dobrofsky (1978: 165-166) explain the reasons for this:

The military had to socialize families into their society as effectively as it accomplished this with individual recruits. By creating an elaborate network of psychological, recreational, religious, economic and educational services and facilities marked by convenience and reduced prices, the military has managed to isolate wives and children from civilian influences while using them to free the man to maintain a relatively uninterrupted relationship with his work and with the military.

This is particularly evident and needed when members are off on missions and the military organizes support networks for the spouses who must manage family matters on their own.

According to Soeters (1995: 3): "An institutional orientation would imply a total dedication to the organization, in which living and working are one and the same and families comply fully to the organization's requirements." In the traditional military, this compliance begins when members are isolated from their families in basic socialization/training and continues throughout the members' careers which often takes them away from home for extended periods for training or missions. Because of the male concentration in the CF — 89.3 percent of the CF are male and 10.7 percent female (Oakes 1994: 4) — it is women who find themselves in support roles for their mates and ultimately for the military. The

idea that one's institutional membership is congruent with notions of self (and family) sacrifice is thus reinforced (Moskos 1986: 51). This is well documented in the study of military wives in Canada by Harrison and Laliberté (1994: 11, 13):

Member's frequent long absences presuppose their wife's willingness to assume 100 percent of the couple's domestic work and child care responsibilities during several months of the year...frequent postings to new locations presuppose military wife's willingness to be continually doing the unpaid work of preparing for, unpacking after and helping their children adjust to moves. The very fact of postings in itself kills most wife's chances of developing autonomous careers...wives' weak affiliations with the labour market create vacuums in their lives, which make them an ideal reserve army of cheap - and volunteer - 'women's work' on military bases. As a result of the military's segregation from civilian society, the many ways in which the military elicits her direct loyalty to the organization, and the fact that she has almost no opportunity to develop her own career, the wife often invests in her husband's career even more intensely than would a civilian woman in comparable circumstances.<sup>17</sup>

This leads us to the gendered orientation of the traditional military organization which is based on the idea of combat where the image of the warrior and the need for male bonding are perceived as the ultimate expressions of this combat orientation. According to Enloe (1983: 7) military ideology "presumes a concept of 'masculinity'." Similarly Beck (1971: 140) tells us that the military makes available to itself notions of masculinity, virility and excitement.

Military culture is characterized by its combat, masculine-warrior (or CMW) paradigm. First, the military's core activity which, defines its very existence and meaning, is combat. Military structures and forces are built around combat activities.... The Services organize and train themselves around their combat roles, distinguishing between combat arms and support activities (Dunivin 1994: 533).

Although Dunivin is writing about the American forces, this can also be said of the CF and particularly for the CAR where toughness in terms of more vigorous physical standards could be a method of demonstrating masculinity.<sup>18</sup> From their annual reports from 1979 to 1994, we can see that CAR soldiers spent more time than the average soldiers honing their combat/war skills yet they were never able to actually test themselves in

combat except for an episode in Cyprus. This is perhaps important since a peace-making mission in Somalia finally offered an opportunity for some gung-ho members of the CAR to prove themselves in battle.

#### CIVILIANIZATION OF THE MILITARY

Observers began noticing a change in the military after World War II, mainly due to changes in the technology of war<sup>19</sup> as officers went from managing men in combat to managing resources and weapons systems (see Kellett 1982: xvii). In the military, professional competence came to mean proficiency in technical knowledge rather than a broader-based comprehension of the moral issues involved in applying that technical knowledge. An increasingly narrower definition of competence identifies it with knowledge of current military techniques and technology. Proficiency becomes an issue of specialized study and knowledge which then becomes the measure of competency. Soldiers become good gunners or computer operators, and are at risk of losing sight of the core values of the larger institution which are also considered to be part of the military's expertise. Sociologists such as Janowitz (1970: 130) were concerned that officers were acquiring skills and orientations common to civilian administrators and even political leaders.

Increased specialization of military forces brought about by the adoption of technically complex weapons carried the danger of dividing units into occupationally specialized groups (Starr 1982: 67). New occupational values were thought to have emerged due to increasing job specialization,<sup>20</sup> a decline in the perceived importance of the combat arms, the introduction into the military of civilian management principles and bureaucratic rationalization. This was true of the Canadian Forces after unification in 1968 but it became a significant concern after the amalgamation of the headquarters for the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence in 1972. Thus, the "traditional perception of military service as a calling, or vocation, legitimated by broadly based national values,<sup>21</sup> is giving way to a subjective definition of military service as an occupation in the labour market, involving the performance of work for civilian types of rewards under specified contractual conditions" (Cotton 1988: 41).

The military then began to suffer from another civilian influence: "bureaucratization." This probably had something to do with the maintenance of the army during peace times in the Cold War climate. According



to Soeters (1995: 6) "armies in peacetime are highly bureaucratic, including a tall hierarchy, and an elaborated command structure." In Canada, it also had to do with the decline in actual combat operations. In the CF, the majority of enlisted personnel are engaged in technical and administrative roles rather than in purely military endeavours. This trend was apparent even in the 1970s. By the end of the 1970s, 42 percent of enlisted ranks were in technical support roles and 35 percent were in administrative support (Cotton and Pinch 1986: 242). They formed part of the complex defence bureaucracy, which only resembled the traditional pyramid model of a combat organization (Pinch 1986: 242). However, bureaucratization was seen by traditionalists as a threat to the military's separateness, and military men began to fear the erosion of the warrior ethos of leadership and its replacement with managerial techniques. As one of our interviewees remarked: *Another problem that has arisen in our military. The higher ranking military in all branches of our military and all NATO military are predominantly managers who are not warriors and don't understand the warrior mentality.*

Even worse is that the organization might take the view that a manager in one area of expertise is equivalent to the military leader (Gabriel 1982: 98). According to one Canadian base administrative officer: "Fundamentally I don't think we operate a business...what we are doing, or should be doing is training for war.... You won't be successful at war if you operate a business, always concerned about the bottom line and the dollar sign" (quoted in Bercuson, 1996: 76).

Officers were in danger of becoming managers of human and material resources, and military socialization was shifting incrementally toward the managerial. Writers began noticing the dichotomy and contrast between two sets of skills and attitudes: the heroic qualities of loyalty, unity obedience, hardiness and zeal versus the managerial which was useful in coping with the larger political and technological environment (Wamsley 1973: 400-402). The bureaucrat's ultimate career goal is to follow orders and to minimize career risks, ever moving upward as he continues to "manipulate the rules of the system to his own career advantage" whereas military leaders need to take decisions, be flexible, take risks, accept responsibility and exercise judgment (Gabriel 1982: 98). Barnett (1967: 17) called it "a tug-of-war between these two qualities: between the conception of a soldier as a fighting-man and the new conception of him, born of the industrial age, as a military manager." This trend was not limited to North America.

According to Born and van der Muelen (1995: 6) the tendency in the Netherlands has been to go from warrior to manager.

### *Unification*

In Canada, civilianization of the military can be traced to the *Canadian Forces Reorganization Act* of February 1, 1968, commonly known as "unification." At that time, the three armed services (the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Navy) were organized into one service — the Canadian Forces. This met with some resistance and a lot of senior officers resigned (Granatstein April 22, 1996 news interview). The goal of the Act was to rationalize and streamline the administration of the forces. According to Cotton (1983), the "unification of the three forces represented the application *in extremis* of the principle of managerial rationality to the social organization of defence." Two thirds of military personnel are in the three commands: Maritime, Land Forces and Air. The remaining third are posted to National Defence Headquarters.

In 1972, the Trudeau Government established a new National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) to create an organization which would unite civilian and military personnel into a structure in order to advise on and administer defence policy and manage the CF. The Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence are two separate organizations. The CF are headed by the Chief of Defence Staff and DND is headed by the Deputy Minister. Both the Chief of Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister report directly to the Minister of Defence.

Although meant to make things run more smoothly, unification and the establishment of NDHQ are perceived as contributing factors to the increased bureaucratization of the military. Iverson (1995: 7) fears that the Canadian military has become extensively bureaucratized over the last six or seven decades, a process, reflected in the civil service mentality of the officer corps. An anecdote by a Canadian officer illustrates the increased bureaucratization of the military:

...during a recent high-level meeting for senior and general officers from National Defence Headquarters, a senior civilian bureaucrat within the Department of National Defence took pains to remind those present that they were civil servants. What is unnerving is that no-one - including the Chief of Defence Staff - contradicted her.<sup>22</sup>

By 1980, Canadian MGen Vance noted that the CF was facing a crisis of military ethos because "civilian standards and values are displacing their proven military counterparts and, in the process, are eroding the basic fiber of Canadian military society" (Vance 1980: 18). Witnesses to the task force commissioned to review the unification of the Canadian Forces in 1979-1980 also noted that civilianization at all levels of NDHQ had resulted in a loss of focus on the "sharp end" (combat troops) and that the number of civilians involved in the decision-making process of NDHQ had altered the approach taken to military problems (Vance 1980: 41). Similarly, in a 1982 study, Kasurak (1982: 109) found that:

A significant number of the members of the armed services have come to believe that the Canadian Forces have adopted civilian norms and standards to an unacceptable degree and that civilian public servants exercise undue influence over matters that are (or should be) exclusively military in nature.

Cotton (1983:9) maintains that unification increased the importance of the "administrative - technical support segment" to the detriment of combat-oriented officers. Similarly BGen Jeffries (memo, March 6, 1995: 3) notes somewhat sadly: "Trained to lead and to fight, leaders at all levels are now becoming resource managers, with financial accountability being more important than operational success." At the same time, the military was becoming bureaucratized, the concept of "organizational culture" was becoming popular.<sup>23</sup> This idea allowed for even more civilian ideas to be imported to the military. Experts felt that the military could be treated as any other organization in terms of predicting and analyzing effectiveness and in applying techniques from the business sector. There was a penetration of values associated with civilian business enterprise such as cost effectiveness, personnel management, centralized promotion, computer purchasing, salary control, etc. (Gabriel 1982: 94-107). Cost effectiveness began to be as important as operational readiness. The Department of National Defence began to refer to itself as a "team" — "a dynamic, innovative Defence Team committed to excellence, continuous improvement and mutual respect" "a results-oriented and cost-effective defence organization, which makes optimum use of entrusted resources to achieve defence objectives."<sup>24</sup>

The team, of course, consists of civil servants and military personnel working together, but it's hard to have a team when the rules of membership are different for different players. More civilian ideas surfaced in

rationalization initiatives such as Defence 2000 which was designed “to do more with less.” Under this initiative the Management, Command and Control Re-engineering Team was created in 1995 to co-ordinate re-engineering across DND. Re-engineering ran into snags and resistance to culture change from what Cotton (1997: 2) calls the “beleaguered warriors” at NDHQ. “Traditionalists, usually from warrior classifications, warm to any defence of the treasured culture of the past, but grow cold and antagonistic when the need for adaptive change is raised” (Cotton 1997: 3).

These defenders of traditionalism — mostly from the army according to Cotton — have resisted corrosive “civilianization” of the CF. Kier (1995) has pointed out that policy makers may be taken aback by the military’s seeming unwillingness to implement change yet this resistance can be explained if we understand culture as the “means” rather than the “ends”: It may be that the military simply seeks to safeguard some part of the traditional way of doing things whose preservation is, for some officers, considered integral to the successful execution of their mission (Kier 1995: 93). These members of the military feel the moral obligation to value that which has proven itself in battle and to treat with suspicion the new and unproven. “Changes from a culture that has stood the test of war will be made with the greatest reluctance, and often only by force” (Shelley 1996: 25). Our interviewees agreed: *The military culture is very conservative. If there’s a conservative institution, it’s the army. It’s the army that changes the most slowly in a society. They tend to be hermetically closed to new ideas.* Authors, such as Bercuson (1996: 106), see this resistance to change as a “life and death struggle for the hearts and minds of soldiers.”

In the United States and other countries with a realistic appreciation of the role military power plays in the pursuit of national interests, the military bureaucrats are usually contained by the warriors. It is the warriors who run things, because an army is for war. But in the Canadian army, the warriors are a beleaguered minority, merely a small part of what the government calls “the defence team”. And they are more often “managed” as part of the team than commanded by other warriors.

### *Just Another Job*

Civilianizing influences have led to a shift from what has been described as an institutional focus (see above) to an occupational one. This shift was first pointed out by Moskos (1970) who studied the growing inclination



among military personnel to see their work as an ordinary occupation. The occupational model also frequently implies priority of self-interest rather than that of the employing organization (Moskos 1986: 51).

Members with an institutional attitude see their service as a calling, recognize a "purpose transcending individual self-interest" and accept demands of "all-sacrifice and dedication".... Those subscribing to an occupational orientation, however, put their own pecuniary and other interests ahead of the military and are willing to serve only to the limits established under the legal contractual agreement they have made with their employer (Flemming 1989: 3).

Other rationalization efforts also affected the institutional characteristics of the military. Members and their families no longer had free room and board. In the 1970s, members had to start paying for housing. Base housing is no longer subsidized and rents have to follow the market prices of the civilian world established by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. At the same time, soldiers are subjected to public sector wage freezes. In a letter about morale in the Canadian army BGen Jeffries (March 6, 1995) writes:

The loss of pay incentives is viewed as breach of contract; the twin barbs of fee increases (MQ [members' quarters] rents, MQ liability insurance, etc.) and reduced services (many under the banner of "new ways of doing business") are viewed as discretionary management decisions which, again, protect funding for higher priorities at the soldiers' expense. The net result is further erosion of the credibility of the Canadian Forces (CF) as a benevolent employer and of confidence in the chain of command.

According to Oakes' (1994:18-19) survey of the CF, the strongest sources of dissatisfaction concern the "negative impact of a military career on the quality of spousal/partner relationships, social life, family life and the effect on the member's financial stability." One soldier (quoted in Oakes 1994: 19) said "my civilian friends have a higher quality of life, more time for hobbies, benefits of investments due to stability.... Life in the CF is expensive." Similarly, Canadian BGen Jeffries (March 6, 1995) noted:

There are numerous restrictions on military family income that increase the financial pressure on our soldiers. Today, most Canadian families have two wage earners, not one. This is due, in part, to the requirement for two salaries to maintain a reasonable standard of living and, in part, to meet the legitimate

expectations of spouses to pursue a career and contribute to the family income. Frequent moves, isolated base locations with few employment prospects, little opportunity to gain seniority, all conspire against spouses finding suitable and well-compensated employment. Combined with the continuing wage freeze, this results in a large number of financially challenged military families.

The lack of on-base facilities forced many soldiers to rent or buy housing off base. As a result, soldiers became like other public servants, "nine to fivers," leaving for work in the morning like their neighbours and returning home to the family at night. In this way, military personnel became more integrated into the civilian community as their interests became less centred around the base and the military way of life.

Yet even though only a small minority of military personnel were directly involved in combat operations by the 1980s (only 16.5 percent of military manpower in Canada is in the three traditional combat arms: infantry, armour and artillery [Cotton 1979: 11]) the notion of combat — preparation for battle and actual battle — remained a central military value in Canada. According to MGen (ret.) Terreau (personnel communication) the entire measure of operational readiness in the CF in the 1990s is the ability to go to war in Europe.<sup>25</sup> Of course, one has to doubt the Canadian army's ability to be operationally ready for anything since financial constraints have led to the use of almost obsolete equipment and severe shortages (Bercuson 1996: 95-96). As Parker (1995) has noted, there was, in policy, a promotion of institutional values while, in practice, an occupational focus.

This contradiction continues to this day. In a detailed study of CF recruitment practices, Parker noted that although military recruiters stated "that elements of the espoused culture were important in the operation of the armed services, the decisions that were made regarding whom to enrol were governed to a large extent by the operating or actual organizational culture" which Parker maintains is now an occupational culture. "Thus while their own beliefs about the military and its values reinforced an institutional culture, the values of an occupational culture dominated when deciding about an applicant's suitability for enrolment" (Parker 1995: 178).

Table 1:  
Military Social Organization: Institutional versus Occupational Values

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Institutional</i>	<i>Occupational</i>
legitimacy	normative values	marketplace economy
societal regard	esteem based on notions of service	prestige based on level of compensation
role commitments	diffuse: generalist	specific: specialist
reference groups	"vertical" within the armed forces	"horizontal" with occupations outside the military
recruitment appeals	character qualities change of lifestyle	technical training
evaluation of performance	holistic and qualitative	segmented and quantitative
basis of compensation	rank and seniority decompressed by rank	skill level and shortages decompressed by rank
mode of compensation	much in non-cash form or deferred	salary and bonuses
legal system	military justice broad purview over member	civilian jurisprudence narrow purview over member
female roles	limited employment restricted career pattern	wide employment open career pattern
spouse	integral part of the military community	removed from military community
residence	work and residence adjacency military housing relocations	work and residence separation civilian permanent housing
post-service status	veterans' benefits and preferences	same as non-server

Source: Moskos (1988: 58).

### *The Charter*

The biggest contributors to civilianization of the Canadian military have been unification in 1968 and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Acceptance of the Charter marked a change in Canada, so much so that some authors such as Claude Bariteau (1996) believe it is the Charter which makes our country truly different. For the military, human rights legislation eroded paternalism and imposed legal standards over interpersonal and bureaucratic relationships. "[N]o longer is fairness dependent on unwritten rules of conduct" (Parker 1995: 60). Members of the military have complained that "traditional, paternalistic systems, including the Navy Divisional and Army Regimental systems, are increasingly at odds with human rights legislation" (DND 1995b: 15). Civilian standards have penetrated and begun to change the military. According to Bercuson (1996: 82): "Of all the institutional changes which have taken place in the Canadian army over the last two or three decades, the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms may well be the most controversial." The recognition of women in combat roles (1989), common-law marriages (1991) and gays and lesbians (1992) have all occurred as a result of legal challenges under the Canadian *Human Rights Act* or the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and have broken down military homogeneity and insularity.<sup>26</sup> Many soldiers resent these changes and feel they have a negative impact on the military.

There was consensus, across rank groupings and elements, that perceived societal pressures and changes within the CF related to human rights issues, a cultural trend towards a victimization mentality and a perceived civilianization of the military, have created a climate more conducive to the submission of complaints and grievances (DND 1995b: 6).

Others feared that women in combat roles and the presence of homosexuals in units would ruin unit cohesion and put soldiers at risk. It also put the homosexuals at risk: *Homosexuality is not accepted. It isn't part of military custom. You can't show that you're a homosexual. You'll get harassed, you'll get killed...it's not accepted.* "Homosexuals were classified as sexual deviants and were considered a threat to good order, discipline and security" (Pinch 1994b: 11). More than one CAR soldier told me how he missed the good old days when you could use more physical and psychological means to keep homosexuals in line. The following quotes concerning homosexuality are excerpts from several interviews.



After '85 things changed, essentially because you were able to do anything or be anything you wanted to and not be punished — all because of human rights. I remember in the old days, if we discovered that the guy living in the barracks was homosexual, we didn't beat him. We would bring him to the shower room, take mops, take everything we had and we would wash him — without beating him. He was so scared he had to get out.

At one point, someone made me realize that there was homosexual behaviour among the men. But we're so homophobic that when we get free time, we go out and get ourselves a woman, just to prove that we're not homosexual. When we go out, the woman becomes a machine, an object that we'd use as much as possible, and talk about as much as possible because afterwards there won't be any women around. When you're working two or three or even six months with guys and you don't even see any women, well sure you get some different behaviour, jokes and stuff. It's acceptable to some point, but it's all borderline. So once you get the chance, you have to prove that you want a woman. If you have this borderline behaviour and don't go out and get a woman, someone will start a rumour. If they start a rumour, you find yourself with broken legs. Really physically broken.

*We can't accept homosexuality because it represents weakness. We've still got the old '50s values, when it wasn't acceptable. To me, if a homosexual keeps it to himself, it's his own business. If he does his job well, I can deal with it. It's like that in the civilian world, but in the army if you have any particular behaviour, you'll get harassed. I've heard of guys getting dragged off to the toilets and getting their kneecaps and wrists broken by banging them on toilet doors. One guy got his leg broken, boot-kicked, just so he would leave.*

In his study of the CF Oakes (1994: 23, 24, 26) concluded that esprit de corps (an institutional value) was negatively affected by the imposition of human rights legislation. Oakes noted a perception among soldiers that minority groups receive preferential treatment, and have perceived unfair advantages, and that double standards are applied to women and bilingual personnel, who were seen as having better opportunities for promotion<sup>27</sup> by virtue of their status and not on the basis of individual merit. Some of my interviewees felt that equal opportunity had led to a lowering of standards.

*Combat leadership courses used to be 14 weeks and then they went down to 10 weeks and then they went down to 8 weeks and now they're 6. It used*

*to be that the CLC [Combat Leadership Course] started with 35 people and only 9 people made it. It was a hard course. It was made to be hard. Now you can't fail someone who's Black or female or has yellow eyes or whatever. Now if there are 25 people on a course 25 will make it. So the weak ones pass and three years down the road these weak ones that pass will be sergeants or master corporal, positions of authority.*

*With the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms in the army now, there's no more weeding out. Some of the Airborne in Somalia wouldn't have made it to the Airborne 10 years ago. They would have been weeded out. But now the system doesn't allow it any more.*

Another impact has been the imposition of provisions which protect Canadian citizens from over policing such as arbitrary searches. To some officers, this has reduced their ability to maintain good order and discipline. For example, soldiers' quarters cannot be searched for weapons or alcohol or even racist literature.

*Basically, in the past we said: "Sorry your life style is inconsistent with the kinds of things we would want you to do in the military. We do not want you to be bringing in these kinds of ideas." What happened of course — and I am and always have been an individual and human rights advocate in the military system. But one of the things that I will say is that the Human Rights Act, the Human Rights Commission and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms have probably had quite an impact in terms of how you can identify the people that you don't want to let into the military organization. It really does restrict. What can you do? Can you actually go and ask about somebody's background? Can you get a police report? No! I mean you can't do all those things. Before you could go to the police and say "I got Joe Blow here, do you got anything on him?" And they would tell me. But you can't do it anymore. So there are some restrictions on the institution itself.*

Moreover, people are afraid to impose discipline for fear that they might be challenged. *With the Charter of Rights in the army now, you got young corporals and privates who will question the sergeant, for any little thing. Some soldiers feel that this is an improvement.*

*I was told when I joined that I gave up my rights to protect the rights of Canadians. I was sure for the first six years that I was in the military that*

*I didn't have any rights. Then I learned that there are some things that they just can't do to me. Now people have a different mind set. In the old days, a corporal to me was God. I actually wasn't sure sometimes if he wouldn't just take me out back and just kick the shit out of me. Now he knows it isn't going to happen.*

*Before there were corporal punishments. I'm not talking about your boss just literally kicking you in the side, 'cause that never happened, but there were shots in the chest or push-ups when you're on a course. They'd hand them out 500 at a time. Wrong foot forward 500 push-ups. You end up owing thousands of push-ups. You know you're never gonna finish them. Once human rights stepped in, all of a sudden that was no longer kosher. You couldn't do that anymore.*

*You're not allowed to call a guy scum bag or dirt bag anymore, 'cause it's harassment. Before, it didn't matter — you had no rights. The methods are different now. Before, the troops were tougher. Now, I find our soldiers are more and more politically aware. They've got better education and things like that. Before, if they told me I had to do it, I went and did it. I didn't worry about why. But now anytime we tell someone to do something you have to tell him why he has to do it — otherwise he won't do it.*

In the past, recruits in the CF were sometimes worn down by physical and verbal abuse but that has now changed. As one of my interviewees said: *I have to be careful now when I am screaming at a female recruit. I could be up on harassment charges.* BGen Jeffries (March 6, 1995: 5) bemoans the effect that human rights legislation has also had on institutional “warrior” values:

Out of political correctness, senior leaders appear unwilling to strongly articulate the essential role of soldiers and the need to protect the warrior ethic. Hyper-sensitivity to human rights issues has created an air of paranoia at all rank levels, causing leaders to spend their time attending to the “soft” issues and looking over their shoulders, rather than looking after the main business of soldiering.

Similarly, Granatstein (1997: 15) tells us that the “single most serious problem faced by the CF is that the ‘politically correct’ and safe way of doing things is not the best way to prepare a military that can fight and win wars.”

*Careerism*

Individualism is causing internal dissension while recent fiscal reductions have meant that a long-term career is no longer guaranteed. In addition, the contradiction between an institutional ethos and actual practices sends mixed messages and sets up confusing if not competing ethics within the system. "All for one and one for me," so to speak. In a letter dated February 17, 1995, Canadian Col Oehring wrote: "In an 'every man for himself', dollar and career oriented atmosphere, many of our junior leaders may not be equipped to handle the challenges of the new age."

As occupational values penetrate the army, there is a growing mistrust among the ranks. As far back as the late 1970s Cotton (1979: 66) noted that the troops generally did not accord officers legitimacy outside of strict working hours, as they see them simply as "taskers" acting in the interest of their careers and organizational goals. Rarely were they deemed to be genuinely concerned with the needs and daily lives of their men. This does not seem to have changed. Grimshaw (1995: 8) recently observed that the lower ranks seem to have lost confidence in their senior leaders' ability to look after them, to "lead" and that they perceive a gap yawning between them and the seniors. In addition more and more junior officers and other ranks were disillusioned with the willingness or the ability of the chain of command to correct wrongs. Research reports by the CF (Oakes 1994, DND 1995b) show that soldiers and junior officers blame leaders, particularly senior officers with being more concerned with their personal agendas and "politics" than with their subordinates.

New values also have an affect on accountability. Parker (1995: 81) writes that "occupationalists...in the professional military devote substantial effort to ensuring that nothing untoward or unflattering can ever be attributed to them: if blame can be deflected elsewhere then that course should be followed." This is particularly important when it comes to reporting difficulties. Officers and soldiers may hide emotional or physical problems for fear of being released. Moreover, no career-oriented officer wants a blemish on his record or to make a negative report to a superior. Better to pass the problem on to the next guy. Sidestepping of accountability is becoming increasingly easier in a more specialized military:

Whenever the roles of individuals within a group become specialized, it becomes both possible and easy for the individual to pass the moral buck to



some other part of the group. In this way not only does the individual forsake his conscience but the conscience of the group as a whole can become so fragmented and diluted as to be nonexistent (Peck 1983: 218).

During a DND survey of civilian and CF members (DND 1995a: 2/10) two main issues emerged concerning leadership: "first, that leaders are 'building their empires' and 'following their personal agenda' and, secondly that DND is too bureaucratic." Another important issue was that leaders "must walk the talk." In other words, they "follow the premise of 'do as I say, not as I do'" (DND 1995a: 5). It would seem that some sectors of the CF have shifted from an institutional to an occupational military culture. This affirmation is supported by numerous studies and climate surveys carried out by the CF over the years (Cotton 1979, Cotton and Pinch 1986, DND 1995a and Parker 1995). "The present culture of the military is judged to reflect more of the characteristics of the occupational culture than that of the institutional" (Parker 1995: 68). Of course, this change is not homogenous across the CF.

*You can almost put the operational and the support elements on a continuum. Some of the support troops would really be quite close to the civilian world. Of course, at the other end are the warriors. In terms of warrior orientation, the army would be at the high end and the Airborne at the extreme end of that. Then would come the navy, the operational air force and the support groups. Communicators or signallers, who have often deployed to the field, fall somewhere in the middle.*

Occupational values are intruding in some units, but in more operational units, like the CAR, institutional values remain very important. This can lead to a clash of values between operational units on the ground and officers at headquarters.

With continued service, greater experience and varied employment, the traditional values often are compromised by the NCM or officer for the sake of expediency, pragmatism or careerism. Ergo, the occupational values begin to intrude subtly to the point that, in certain employment such as a headquarters staff officer, they come to dominate. Usually in operational units, the institutional values are paramount because of the influence of communalism/collectivism and mutual dependence. Alternatively, in support or staff functions the occupational values are more prevalent because duties and responsibilities tend to be more independent and individualistic. Thus, organizational position, time in service, military branch are some of the situational factors that affect one's embracing either institutional or occupational values (Parker 1995: 68).

Occupational values are apparently even motivating participation in peace missions. In a traditional military, there is no compensation for hardship and risk. However, in the CF, special allowances were introduced in the 1970s which compensate for abnormal risk and environmental concerns, for example, the hazardous duty allowance and a hostility bonus.<sup>28</sup> Soldiers on peace missions receive this compensation in addition to leave travel assistance and a telephone allowance. So serving in peace missions can represent a significant financial benefit which then becomes an incentive for multiple tours and extensions of tours (Pinch 1994a: 99). Soldiers can become partially motivated by profit — definitely not part of General de Chastelain's vision but certainly in harmony with the civilianization model where market values of profit can be present in the military. *Everyone wants to go on a tasking overseas because you get paid an extra \$1000 a month.*

#### DIVERSITY IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY

One indicator of the penetration of civilian norms in the military is the degree to which it reflects the larger society in which it is found. In March 1993 the Canadian Forces regular population totalled 77,783 (Oakes 1994: 4). As noted earlier, of these, 89.3 percent were male and 10.7 percent female. Needless to say, this does not reflect the gender distribution of males and females in Canadian society and women remain under-represented in the CF although the 1989 Human Rights Tribunal decision that all military occupations and employment be opened to women has had the effect of increasing the number of female applicants (Parker 1995: 181).<sup>29</sup> Further research is needed to investigate why women would not be attracted to apply for entrance into what has been a traditionally male preserve. Their presence in the combat arms is negligible.<sup>30</sup> While women are entering the navy and air force in much larger numbers than before, the army remains male.

Similarly, ethnic minorities (that is, not of British or French origin) are under-represented in the Canadian army. In February and March 1995, the CF conducted a self-identification diversity survey to determine the ethnic composition of the forces since there had been no systematic collection of this information over the years. Previously, the military was unwilling to ask a member's ethnic affiliation for fear that it would be a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, the CF has now become subject to Bill C-64, the federal employment equity legislation. Now that the military has an obligation to improve the equal

opportunity climate, it needs to know the ethnic composition of the CF. Thus, a series of studies was begun to create a diversity data base for employment equity reporting (Chouinard and Chiasson 1995: 1).

Of the 98,483 questionnaires sent out to regular and reserve forces in a 1995 diversity study of the CF, 6,689 people responded. Of these respondents 1,395 or 2.1 percent self-identified as Aboriginal<sup>31</sup> and 2,017 or 3.1 percent as visible minorities. According to Parker (1995: 182) who studied CF recruitment patterns, the comparatively small number of applicants to the CF from visible minorities has not changed in the last five years. If we examine the information from Table 2 based upon the 1995 diversity study, we can see that 10 percent of Aboriginal respondents and 25 percent of visible minority respondents in the regular CF are officers (22.5 percent of CF personnel were officers in 1993). This would suggest that Aboriginal members in the CF are not being equally represented in the rank structure.

Table 2:  
Ethnic Diversity in the Canadian Forces, 1995

		<i>Aboriginal</i>	<i>Visible Minority</i>
Regular forces	Officer	112	309
	NCM	1,011	910
	Total regulars	1,123	1,219
Reserves	Officer	20	95
	NCM	252	703
	Total reserves	272	798
Overall total		1,395	2,017

Source: Chouinard and Chiasson (1995: 14, 20).

In terms of the Canadian Airborne, there were 7 Aboriginals, 11 Blacks and 17 members from other visible minorities in the CAR in 1995. In a reduced force of about 600 strong, this would mean that while there were more Blacks and visible minorities in the CAR than in the regular forces, there were half as many Aboriginals<sup>32</sup> (1.16 percent of the CAR was Aboriginal compared to 2.1 percent in the regular CF; 1.83 percent of the CAR was Black compared to 0.75 percent in the regular CF; 2.8 percent of the CAR was from visible minorities compared to 2.2 percent in the regular CF. (Brodeur 1996: 93). As Brodeur (1996: 92-93) has pointed

out, these comparisons must be made with reservation since the data are not easily comparable.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the data do say something about the nature of the CF and of the CAR which is of interest, that is, that the CAR was predominantly White and exclusively male. This might have had implications for the deployment to Somalia since work by Miller and Moskos (1995: 625) shows that White male combat soldiers were more likely to adopt negative stereotypes of Somalis during the U.S. deployment to Africa than female soldiers or soldiers from minority groups.

So, the CF continues, for now, to be predominantly White and male. "As in the applicant population, enrollees tend to be representative of the young, urbanized, secondary school educated male cohort in society" (West et al. 1991: 28). For now, the CF continues to enrol a disproportionately high number of post-secondary/non-university educated, male applicants and individuals with prior military exposure. Conversely, non-British/French applicants and females are significantly under-represented (West et al. 1991:1). The army, more so than the navy or air force, continues to be a predominantly White, male, heterosexual preserve.

Nevertheless, the Canadian military is shifting toward closer congruence with Canadian civilian society. According to Parker (1995), one demographic characteristic of the Canadian population which has received official recognition and approval as an employment standard is language. "To meet the requirements of the Official Languages Act, a quota has been established to have 27 percent of the Canadian military French speaking, resulting in the largest, single demographic subculture" (Parker 1995: 87). Again, trends in the larger Canadian society are imposing change on the CF.<sup>34</sup>

#### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

There are two levels to civil-military relations in Canada. One is the formal relationship between the military and the government and the other is public perception of the military. There have been many books written on civil-military relations (see Bland 1995 for information on Canada). Briefly, to outline the formal structure, the CF communicates with the Parliament through the Chief of the Defence Staff who reports to the Minister of National Defence. The Chief of the Defence Staff is similar to a deputy minister but differs in that the Chief of the Defence Staff has the right to circumvent normal channels and talk directly to the Governor General, if need be. The Governor General of Canada is the commander-in-chief of the Canadian Forces.



The military sees itself as separate and tolerates an uneasy relationship with politicians, at times resenting their interference. Parker (1995: 86) talks about different subcultures within the CF such as the army, navy and air force, and elite groups. However, he goes on to say that there are some opinions "which transcend the subcultures for most service members, including a scepticism about civilians and a distrust of politicians." My informants shared this view.

*Politicians send us to do jobs. Then we go there and they don't even have a clue we're not helping anything. They say they don't have any money but yet they waste money sending us over there. I think it has always been that the politicians don't understand us. We don't understand them. Vice versa. I don't think that there is any love-loss there.*

Similarly, Grimshaw (1995: 5) describes the historic tension and distrust between senior military officers and civil authorities. Parmar (1994: 11) writes that "the military as a sub-system of society, is characterized by distancing from people, relative isolationist aloofness and a distinct non-civilian sub-culture and sub-structure." This feeling of separateness is only enhanced in specialized combat units such as the CAR. According to Neill (nd: 4):

It is in the soldier that the difference between the ethical standards of society - particularly Western society - and the ethical standards of his in-group differ most markedly. Society prizes tolerance, calm, sobriety, fiscal ambition, family values and the rational settlement of disputes; the military tolerates (occasionally insists upon) aggressive behaviour, intolerance of out-group individuals (who may range from friendly civilians to enemy soldiers), the deliberate abuse of alcohol, male bonding, contempt for monetary goals and the violent resolution of arguments. Furthermore, the gulf between the two behavioural patterns is growing wider with increasing rapidity as human rights concerns and the pervasive influence of "political correctness" make themselves felt.

The military and civilians in Canada eye each other with suspicion. Civilian laws, such as the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, insist that the armed forces should be a reflection of Canadian society, mirroring Canada's social demographic make-up (regional, ethnic and gender diversity). Many civilians also feel that the military should reflect society's core values but our interviewees did not agree.

*Over the past couple of years many have tried to transpose to the military system values from the general Canadian culture, from the civilian world. It is only normal. On the other hand, where perhaps many have made a mistake is in trying to model the military society after the civilian society. This, I believe is destined to fail. A democracy cannot defend a democracy. It takes an authoritarian system, one with a clear hierarchy where orders are given and things accomplished in a specific way. And I resent the way many are trying to make the military system more peaceful and politically correct. In order to act aggressively, you have to be aggressive, you have to possess within you the necessary values to be able to kill someone if you have to. But in the civilian Canadian society, these values are unacceptable.*

The average Canadian in fact knows very little about the military because he or she has little contact with the military world. In this way, "boundaries" are maintained between the military and the outside world. "Military people and their families are insulated from the outside world," writes Enloe (1983: 46). Writing about the Canadian military, Harrison and Laliberté (1994: 21) say:

Military people often feel misunderstood by civilians, and so they stick together - a development that is not at all unintended. Combat readiness requires the military to control its members, and part of this control means keeping them - and, to a large extent, their families - segregated from civilian society and from its competing preoccupations and ideologies.

Military tasking also turns the member inward toward the group so, unless a civilian actually works with military people, the chances for exchanges are somewhat limited.

*We never go outside of the military structure. Why don't we go out and train with the civilians, why are we always hidden, cut off from the rest? Why doesn't anyone want to see us? Why can we hardly ever get off the base?*

In Canada, bases are scattered across the country, often in remote areas so the public has little opportunity for interaction with military personnel. Even when military posts are in the middle of town, there seems to be little crossing of this imaginary or real boundary. In an editorial in *The Kingston Whig-Standard* (November 4, 1995), Cotton writes that the cadets in the Royal Military College "spend their years behind those grey stone walls venturing out mostly for sports, finding romantic partners and the occasional parade in full scarlets." In this editorial Cotton is advocat-

ing that the cadets and nearby civilian students share classrooms so they might have more contact with each other.

In an all volunteer force, there is a tendency for the military to reproduce itself, for it to be a separate "warrior" caste, that is, for military sons (and now daughters) to continue in service and for daughters of military families to marry military men. In a survey of NCM recruits in the CF, Boswell and Chevrier (1991: 12) found that more than 60 percent had previous military experience (direct exposure to the military through participation in cadets, reserves, previous regular forces experience or by coming from a military family where siblings and/or parents are, or have been in the CF). "Military organizations, such as cadets and reserve units, and indeed military families, continue to provide the CF with a steady stream of applicants who are likely to be enrolled and successfully complete basic training" (Boswell and Chevrier 1991: 13). A 1989 study (Chevrier and Parker 1989: 31) of applicants to the CF found:

A review of the military family data revealed that more than one in three applicants (33.8%) is from a military family. Since this research focused only on exposure obtained through interaction with "immediate" family members, it is clear that this figure would probably be even higher had the study included cousins, aunts, and uncles....An across the zone analysis of the data showed that the Atlantic and Western Zones had the highest proportion of applicants from military families (39.7% and 36.6% respectively), while only 29.5% of the Quebec Zone and 30.1% of Central Zone applicants were found to come from a military family environment.

Of total successful recruits in Boswell and Chevrier's study (1991: 12) 35.6 percent came from military families. "Previous exposure to the military (cadets, military family) had the greatest influence on the applicants' decision to apply and on their chances of success" (Boswell and Chevrier 1991: 17-18). Studies have not ascertained why someone would "carry on the tradition." However, Chevrier and Parker (1989: 35) found that officer applicants are much less likely than NCM applicants to have been exposed to the military before making their application.<sup>35</sup>

Canadian military work is mostly high profile overseas but not in Canada.<sup>36</sup> From the Suez crisis to the present, the CF has been involved in peacekeeping as one of its primary tasks. This takes members out of the country and out of the public's mind until the media momentarily focuses attention on them. "In a time of sustained peace the military man is disregarded - at best considered

by his country as a necessary evil, and more often as a rather pathetic parasite on the body politic" (Peck 1983: 233). Due to a lack of mechanisms that connect civilian and military societies, civilians receive most of their information on military culture from the movies and the media. Legault (1997: 41) suggests that members of the CF should receive training which prepares them for civil-military relations (in addition to training for the cultural specificity of the countries they are likely to be sent on missions to).

Some members of the military view civilian society with a mixture of contempt and unease. In training, the word "civilian" might be used as an insult—civilian life is seen as lazy, unstructured and undisciplined. There is a generalized feeling among military personnel that civilians don't really understand. Commenting on an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (Ricks, 1995: A1, A4) entitled "Separation Anxiety: New Marines Illustrate Growing Gap Between Military and Society,"<sup>37</sup> Jim Beckman (1995) wrote a letter to the editor saying "When I was in the Marine Corps 30 years ago, we had the same contempt for civilians as apparently the new breed does."<sup>38</sup> The July article describes how military service is pervaded with disdain for the society it protects. "US military officers today talk about themselves as 'we,' separate from society.... They see themselves as different, morally and culturally" (Ricks 1995: 4). Canadian military are not all that much different in their attitudes toward civilians.

*There are many military men who don't like at all to interact with civilians. Why don't they like to interact with civilians? A sense, I think, that they don't share the same values, that they haven't paid the same dues. There is a sense that there is a lot of wasted effort in civilian society. You have to understand, in the military man you are trained to see a situation, devise a plan, implement the plan, situation resolved. As you rise in rank you start adding other factors, but at the basic level that's what the military does. That's why peace-keeping operations are stressful, because you're not there to solve things, you're there to stop things, to establish a level of security, or to try to establish the conditions for others to solve the problem. So this lack of action in face of the situation or problem is very annoying to the military man.*

As mentioned above, because there is little or no contact between civilians and military, the media ends up being the main source of information on the military for the ordinary Canadian citizen. The media's commentaries on the military were criticized by almost all of my interviewees as being a biased and unreliable source of information.



*In general, there is a lack of understanding or basic knowledge of the military within the media. Unfortunately with regards to the Airborne Regiment the media saw all the makings of a sensational story — a murder, a political campaign, possible cover-up, etc., etc. They jumped on it and ran with it. They seized and held the agenda and left all the key players in a reactive mode. The Airborne became part of a much larger story, and in essence got sacrificed. The hope was that by disbanding the Regiment the story would go away and with it a lot of political heat — this didn't happen.*

*What bothered me the most about Somalia was the press.*

## CONCLUSIONS

As we noted in the introduction of this section, the changes in the CF have not been uniform. First, there are important differences between the branches of the armed services. According to Moskos (1970: 37) “The organizational characteristics tending toward convergence with civilian structures have been most apparent in the Air Force, somewhat less so in the Navy, and least of all in the Army” (and the Airborne). Compound this with different values between the armed services and DND, and between officers and non-commissioned members, and we are left with a somewhat scattered and patchy collection of subgroups within the CF, each with different values and attitudes toward the work they do in the military (Soeters 1995: 3). This in turn creates contradictions in values and behaviours.

Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1977: 97) have developed several models of the military:

- the convergent or civilianized military, which emphasizes the increasing similarities between the military and civilian forms of social organization;
- the divergent or traditional military which stresses the growing differentiation between military and civilian social organization; and
- the segmented or pluralistic military which pictures a military that is internally segmented into areas which will be either convergent or divergent.

This latter model seems well suited to the CF in 1992-93 with the CAR representing a unit which was particularly divergent from civilian society. Similarly, Cotton et al (1978: 383) noted as early as 1978 the appearance of a “plural format composed of three broad occupational clusters: administrative–technical which can be characterized as convergent with civilian

society while combat arms and sea operations were considered as divergent" from civilian society. Harries-Jenkins (1986: 255) describes contrasting values in a segmented or plural military which "will simultaneously display organizational trends which are both civilianized and traditional." Regardless of its many transformations, the Canadian military continues to reflect its traditional roots through ceremonies and the image of the warrior hero. Indeed Lopez-Reyes (1971: 124) believes that it would be difficult to conceive of a military organization without a warrior hero cult. But, the heroic leader stands in sharp contrast with the military manager who "reflects the scientific and pragmatic dimensions of war making." The heroic leader is oriented toward the preservation of a traditional institutional image while the military manager is oriented toward the modification of the image in the direction of greater expertise equal to the tasks of large scale management (Janowitz 1960: 21). As we noted above, the heroic military leader may be trying to safeguard some part of the traditional way of doing things, this preservation considered integral to the successful execution of the mission.

As in other armies around the world, the Canadian military is becoming populated by specialists who practise a trade (engineering, mechanics, etc.) and whose interest is primarily in their occupation. Harries-Jenkins (1986: 266) tells us that the subculture of technical/careerists in the British Armed Forces "reflects very clearly many of the attitudes of the civilian specialist." In Canada, according to Cotton (1979: 13) "the combat soldier is in a distinct minority position in the modern volunteer Canadian Forces." In a peacetime, all volunteer force, with its high percentage of support troops, the status and self-image of the ground combat soldier becomes problematic.

Societal norms and cultural preferences do not provide supports for committed participation.... Highly committed combat soldiers [like the Airborne] can come to believe that they are surrounded by paper pushers and bureaucrats-in-uniform who do not share their sense that the central function of the military is to fight, or at least to prepare for war" (Cotton and Pinch 1986: 243).

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and as we will see in Chapter 4, the CAR had many characteristics of a total institution. The base in Petawawa was isolated and, like Goffman's total institution, "part residential community, part formal organization" (Goffman 1962: 453). The single men lived on the base while many married men were close by

in the town of Petawawa which was more like an extension of the military base. According to Goffman (1962: 451), "the central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the kinds of barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres (sleep, play, work) of life." Moreover, the separation from civilian society is social as well as geographical. For example, in the CAR, the men were often off on field exercises together for weeks at a time. Moreover, there was pressure for members to socialize with each other after work. Single men would party together in their barracks or in town while married men would be encouraged by peers to join in group activities such as hunting on weekends. The Airborne didn't just espouse traditional institutional values of combat/warrior, it embodied them and in many ways exaggerated them.

The character of the traditional institutional military is collective and it could be characterized as exhibiting "mechanical solidarity" (Bramson 1971: 185). Mechanical solidarity is a concept developed by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. He used it to describe pre-industrial society where members worked together collectively with a minimum of individualism, subordinated to the needs of the group. Modern society, on the other hand, is characterized by organic solidarity, that is, individualism and specialization. The CAR was characterized by mechanical solidarity and communal fidelity, with such a strong identification (hyper investment) in the commando units that it could be considered a tribal or clan affiliation. (We will see in Chapter 3 how the regimental system itself is considered by some authors to be a pseudo kinship organization). Add to this the Airborne's heavy emphasis on the "masculine mystique" of "combat warrior" and they could be considered almost an anachronism within modern Canadian society and within the changing military.<sup>39</sup>

*Airborne's different. Airborne was a throwback to the old army days. The Airborne mentality is different from the infantry. It's a lot more physical and more demanding. They get around on foot all the time with a 60 pound pack sack. Then of course there's the question of pride. We're proud to be wearing our maroon beret. And anyway, you can tell an Airborne from another soldier just by his training. And just the whole working philosophy was different. In the Airborne, we weren't looking at our working hours. In a normal camp, it's the schedule. Every two weeks you get your pay, that kind of mentality.*

Helicopters can now deliver men into battle more quickly and safely than a parachute (Cohen 1978: 33) and given Canada's current uses of

soldiers the most potent criticism made of the Airborne could be that any good infantry unit could do what the commandos were asked to do.

*In the '80s, the Cold War years, the strategy involved protecting the North. We still believed that the Soviets could try to get to us from the North, so the Airborne was focused on preparing for an Airborne assault in the North. But now, the parachuting capacities have been decentralized and the whole parachuting business is just a last resort.*

Given the trend toward civilianization that the Canadian military has been on since the end of World War II, the Airborne had difficulty fitting into the new "Defence Team." My interviewees were adamant that the reason the Airborne was disbanded had to do with political expediency. They repeatedly stated that the decision to disband the CAR was a "political decision" "to save money."

*Since our government is in debt and they have to pay bills, they decided to demolish the best regiment the army had. It was good excuse, Somalia.*

*They've been talking about closing down the Airborne for a long while now.*

*From the bottom of my heart I believe that government wanted to get rid of the CAR. Get rid of us. Because it was the only way to get money or to save money. This has been going on for a while. In the past, you would retire after age 60, now you can retire after 12 years service. Also the Airborne had a kind of an attitude. We have to think about that attitude too. That attitude was big arms, no brains.*

They were very bitter about the disbanding of the regiment.

*You don't disband a police force because a couple of officers beat up a Black guy.*

*I think the disbanding of the regiment was political expediency. To give the impression that they were doing something and this was probably the quickest way to resolve what was perceived as a problem. Stupid. Look at the British paras on black Sunday. They massacred Irish citizens and they're still there. But Canadians — well we sometimes beat ourselves to death. And now if the situation arises when we need a quick reaction force, where are we going to be?*



*If civilians beat a guy to death it would probably just pass as normal. But is it normal? Well, they were wrong. One guy being beaten to death by other men. Okay. It's in the newspaper. So what. Or you see five White guys beat up a Black guy. Ya, so what. It happens. But as soon as it's military in Somalia beating a guy to death now it's something. Yes they were wrong but they were frustrated inside, they were scared. If scared, drunk or frustrated civilians beat someone up, it will probably go by relatively unnoticed in the press. But it becomes a big thing because it's the army. Because the army means so many things. Again, it was wrong but it probably was not the first case. How many times has it happened before. But because it was in Somalia...*

And they were more than upset by the way they had been treated by the media and the public.

*Ya, I really felt abandoned by Canada. No support. One of the guy's wife was visiting Ottawa and was spit on! We were portrayed as the really, really bad people. No one could understand why. Still can't. The media taking hold of something.... Not everything was rosy, but still, a great feeling of abandonment.*

*A Black guy confronted one of our new guys at the gas station, asking if he was the Negro killer from Somalia. It caught him off guard and, not being a real big guy, he walked away. A lot of Airborne wives were having difficulty going shopping because they were afraid of being accosted by the civilian population. One of my buddies' wives had some civilian lady just laying into her saying her husband is a Somali killer. All she wanted to do was her shopping. A lot of people take everything they see in the media for gospel. They just take it for granted and don't think about the other side of the story. The media will keep pushing and pushing and trying to drudge up a story. There is truth to it but it's one sided. And this side really goes against the Airborne right now. It's still happening and it's not going to stop. Most of us think it's time to forget it and get on with our lives.*

*We felt abandoned. The worst thing that can happen to a soldier is to be let down by other soldiers and to be rejected by his country, like when we came back from Somalia, just like the Americans from Vietnam. They sent me there and they have no gratitude for what I've done. The worse thing they did was to disband the CAR.*

Their words remind us of what Cotton (1980: 297-300; 1990: 49) describes as the "beleaguered warrior syndrome" which is "characterized by a dominant focus on battle and a sense of alienation from a military that is perceived as having become too civilianized to perform its essential function of combat."

*Canada gets a lot of mileage out of token commitments to peacekeeping. They send soldiers because they know that a soldier is not going to react. The last thing we can do is respond with deadly force. Look at Bosnia, where you see Canadian servicemen chained to flagpoles. What a sorry looking sight that is, when you have an entire squadron of Canadian armoured troops taken hostage.... No question of it in my mind. The army in a democracy is always the pawn of the government but I think we deserve better, my family deserves better. We don't even have the right to self-preservation any more and that's a basic human right and they take that away from us. They handcuff our wrists to our ankles and they say "Here, go be a proud Canadian."*

It is also important to note that these beleaguered warriors were also apprehensive of the military. Soldiers were at times very afraid to talk to anyone connected to the Commission of Inquiry for fear that their superiors would punish them. This happened on numerous occasions. This was most true when I held interviews on base.<sup>40</sup>

*People might not want to talk because they just want to forget the whole thing or because they just don't want to get into trouble. They're worried that their very appearance here [speaking to the author in an office on the base] could get them into some sort of trouble. Their bosses know they're coming over here and they wonder if that is going to get them into trouble. They're not sure and they're not willing to take the chance.*

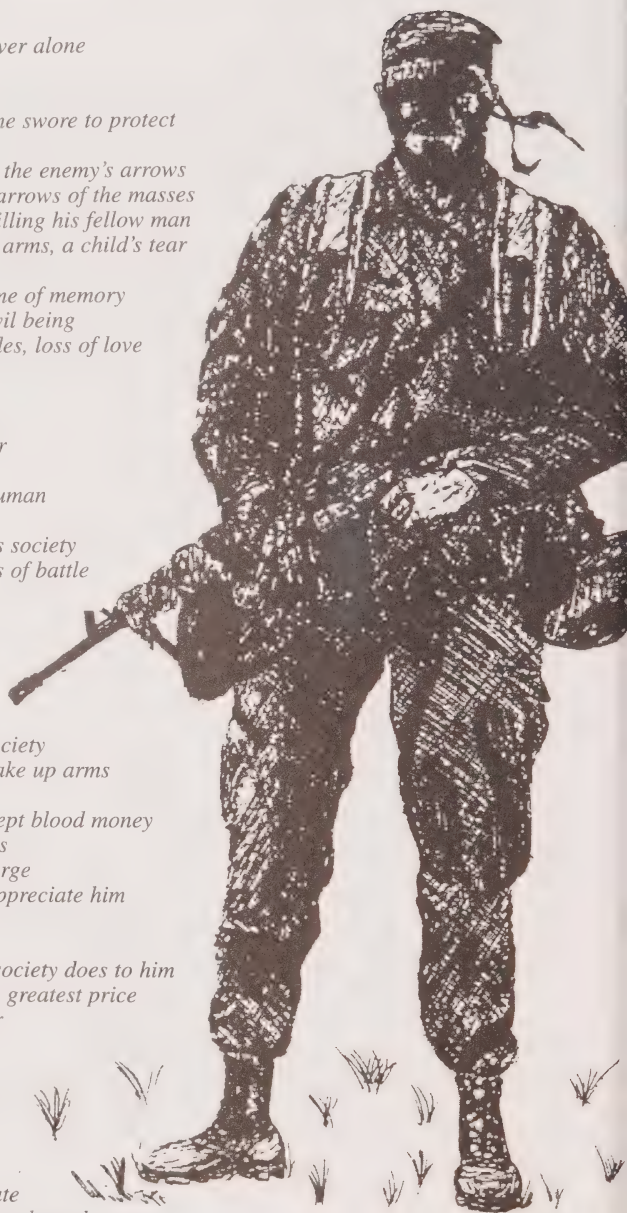
Some soldiers felt that anyone who had been to Somalia was on some sort of "black list." And finally many were just discouraged about all the bother.

*I am very suspicious. I don't know what will come of this. Your results can be turned one way or the other to justify decisions already made. What a waste of money. What are they going to say? "Oops, we made a mistake." When was the last time you heard a politician say that?*



Airborne soldier on patrol

He may stand alone, but is never alone  
 In a crowd he may be lonely  
 He is a soldier  
 Often dejected by the society he swore to protect  
 He gives his all  
 His armour protects him from the enemy's arrows  
 A dulled conscience from the arrows of the masses  
 He is hardened to the act of killing his fellow man  
 Yet soft for a fallen brother in arms, a child's tear  
 He is not without guilt  
 Burned by the everlasting flame of memory  
 Thought of as a hero, or an evil being  
 He has shed tears, for comrades, loss of love  
 And the innocent  
 A thousand times he asks  
 Why?  
 He is a son, a brother, a father  
 He is a man  
 Yet is often treated as a sub human  
 He kills not of his mind  
 But rather for the minds of his society  
 Which hurts more, the wounds of battle  
 Or wounds of words  
 Inflicted not to the body  
 But to the heart and mind  
 He is of the warrior class  
 Separate and distinct  
 He became what he is  
 To protect and preserve his society  
 He has answered the call to take up arms  
 To take life or lose his own  
 He is not a mercenary, to accept blood money  
 But instead he fights for ideals  
 His pay is small, his task is large  
 He appreciates the few that appreciate him  
 For what he is, what he does  
 Stereotyped and labelled  
 He can only accept what his society does to him  
 And yet he is asked to pay the greatest price  
 He does not wish to go to war  
 But would rather avoid it  
 If called to fight he will  
 He must, it is his duty  
 He has given his word  
 What is this soldier?  
 A man  
 He can care, feel, love and hate  
 He can be warm, kind gentle and cruel  
 He is simply  
 A man



Poem hung on an Airborne soldier's wall



## *Military Culture*

*In the infantry, they take care of their own.*

*That's the way it's done.*

CF soldier

In this chapter we look at particular signs and behaviour which set the military and, in particular, the army, apart. We will see that the Canadian Forces (CF) does have a distinct military culture which makes it different from civil society. Military culture is:

- Learned — patterns of behaviour and values are taught formally and informally from one generation of members to another.
- Shared — all members operate according to commonly agreed upon patterns and rules of behaviour. In the military there is an acceptance of an all-pervasive hierarchy and its accompanying deference patterns.
- Symbolic — members share common symbols (e.g., flags and insignia) which represent the group and participate in ritual and ceremony.
- Adaptive to new conditions — adapting to and developing new technology, adapting to change in civilian culture, e.g., in Canada, women have entered the forces.

Military culture can be further broken down into army culture which can in turn be broken down into regimental subcultures. It is important to understand the regimental system, since it is from the army regiments that the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) drew its members.

*My own suspicion is that the other units say: "Well, let the Airborne go down. That's going to protect us. They'll shoot the Airborne and leave us alone. And then we can quietly clean up our act." I had a conversation with somebody who was rather knowledgeable in the regimental world, in the army world. When the Inquiry was announced, he said "I'm very*

*happy it was announced. I hope it will clean up the army, but I hope it will not stay with the Airborne division. It should expand to clean it all up." Because the problem is not an Airborne problem, it is an army problem. Until they decide to do otherwise, well.... Because again, the Airborne was fed into by other units. Some of the things that were imported into the Airborne have come from somewhere else.*

Military culture is influenced by the vertical structures which tie men together through the chain of command, the hierarchy of ranks which proscribe behaviour and the horizontal structures which are designed to bond citizens into groups of men who are willing to die for each other.

#### ASPECTS OF MILITARY CULTURE

In this section, we apply a schema used by Parker (1995: 74-82), in his work on the CF, which describes the following "artifacts" of culture: language, ritual and ceremony, symbols, myths and technology. We use these categories to identify the attributes of military culture which set it apart from civilian society. Like other subcultures and like some professions, the military has its own jargon. As early as 1946, Elkin (1946: 414) remarked that military language patterns reflect an image of solidarity and a break with civilian society. The most significant feature of military expressions is that they give a unique universe of discourse which helps distinguish the member of the military from non-members and, thus, military language patterns become a binding-in-group force. Speech patterns set the proper mode of address for superiors and subordinates thus reinforcing the hierarchical nature of the organization. Social distance is maintained by the constant use of titles and surnames. For example in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), officers are addressed by junior ranks as "sir" and platoon commanders as "mister" and their surnames. The regimental sergeant-major (RSM) is the only non-officer called "mister." Other ranks address non-commissioned officers (NCOs) by their appointment or rank. The company sergeant-major and the RSM are addressed by other ranks as "sir" and the company sergeant-major as "sergeant-major" by all ranks including officers (Irwin 1993: 66-67).

In addition, acronyms constitute a secret military language. Members can speak to each other in a code that no civilian can understand. There are hundreds of pages of Canadian military acronyms. Moreover, Canada's unique history puts a special twist on acronyms since they have

to exist in both official languages. Whenever possible, the CF prefers to use one acronym which applies to both linguistic groups. Another aspect of military language is the use of euphemisms to convey special meaning. For example, landscape becomes "terrain," a town becomes an "objective." Euphemisms also sanitize and objectify death and suffering. You can "neutralize" an enemy. "Collateral damage" means that there have been unintended civilian casualties. Loss of soldiers is described as "personnel losses" or "personnel attrition." The CAR used common military expressions such as "hooah" or "seen." These expressions were not limited to the Airborne and are used by other infantry units as well. (See Chapter 4.)

According to Lopez-Reyes (1971: 153), the "soldier [relies] on an orderly universe with stable laws and traditional values." In the military, ceremonies, customs and codes work to establish an orderly world. Formality and hierarchy is encouraged by deference rituals (saluting) among people. Parker (1995: 76) tells us that "the adherence to a rigidly defined set of rituals and the high degree of effort devoted to ceremony underscores the psycho-social differences between the military and Canadian society." All men in uniform must salute all officers, regardless of rank. Even an RSM with up to 30 years of service must salute a second lieutenant, who may have as little as one year of military service. It is considered extremely rude for an officer to not return a salute. Although the regulations clearly specify that officers should salute all other officers senior in rank to them, customary practice is sometimes different. Apart from the first salute of the day, it is unusual to see saluting among subalterns and among people who work together in the same office every day (Irwin 1993: 65-66).

Symbols are collective representations that are subjectively experienced. According to Geertz (1966: 3), culture "denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate." The army, just as the navy and air force, is set apart from the rest of the military through the wearing of a distinct uniform which reflects its purpose as a ground force. Uniforms and badges communicate much about your place in the military. For example, members of the CAR wore a special smock (in addition to their paraboos and maroon beret) which set them apart from other combat units.

Uniforms describe which service you are in, while badges mark your place in the hierarchy. In the army, there is special attire to be worn in garrison as opposed to in the field where dress codes are more relaxed. Officers and men normally wear an order of dress called "garrison dress" in which the distinctions between officers, NCOs and other ranks are immediately evident. Officers wear gold braid on their shoulders indicating their rank, while men wear theirs on their sleeves. Senior NCOs carry a pace stick or drill cane and wear a red sash diagonally across their chests (Irwin 1993: 62).

Geertz (1966: 3) goes on to say that "symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos — the tone, character and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood and their world-view — the picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order." "Colours," which look somewhat like flags or pennants, assume a "quasi-mystical significance" for military members (Parker 1995: 77). "The display of Colours, trophies, and pictures in messes plays an important role in symbolizing the abstract values which stand behind [army] ideals." (Loomis 1996: 56). *Symbols are quite common in any military organization. In a sense it's — like the colours — something you rally around, something that you identify with. And it's important to create that sense of cohesion and it creates a sense of pride.* There are also unit totems such as the Airborne's winged Pegasus, which are portrayed on cloth, vehicles, pennants, T-shirts or even tattooed on bodies. These sacred symbols serve to tie the members to the past and bind them together in the present.

People are melded together in ceremonies which once had a different purpose. For example, the foot drill was devised to help Greek and Roman soldiers synchronize their movements in order to be able to move in closely packed units for their battle formations. Today, parade drill is practised because "physical movements performed in unison with other members of a group reinforce communal feelings and collective values by subordinating the self to the actions of the group under the directions of a formal leader. Thus ceremony acts to foster group solidarity" (Parker 1995: 77). Ceremonies such as "Trooping the Colour" date back to Oliver Cromwell's model army of the 17th century. At that time it was the custom for each infantry regiment to be characterized by a distinctive colour or pennant and similar facing on its uniforms. This served to distinguish the individual soldier and was a rallying point in battle. The capture of the



regimental colour usually meant defeat, since without this central pivot the unit soon broke up. Infantry battalions in the Canadian Forces (like those in the United Kingdom and Australia) are traditionally presented with two colours by the Queen or her representative. One is called the "Queen's colour" and is displayed only in the presence of the Queen or her representative (including lieutenant-governors of provinces). The other is called the "regimental colour" and is displayed at the discretion of the regiment's commanding officer. The colour is embroidered with the names of the battles in which the unit has fought and serves as a symbol to remind the men of the past histories, traditions and achievements of the regiment. The colour is paraded before the unit in an elaborate ceremony and must be saluted by all soldiers. The colour is even moved with an armed guard. When the CAR was disbanded, its colours were laid to rest amidst much ceremony and emotion in the museum in Petawawa on March 5, 1995 in a special room which resembles a chapel. Another example of the emotion surrounding the laying to rest of regimental colours occurred when the Black Watch reverted to militia status following World War II. "At the final parade, when the regimental colours and battle honours were laid up, many of those present wore black arm bands as a mark of grief" (Bercuson 1996: 127).

Medals, decorations and awards are other symbols which can mark an individual's special service. These include items such as an award for heroism, length of service or participation in a campaign or a commemorative event. Medals are specially minted with unique obverses and reverses, have unique colour patterns in their ribbons and have a definite protocol in their wearing. For example, Canadian soldiers receive campaign medals for their tours of duty on United Nations peace missions. The Airborne soldiers I interviewed felt particularly betrayed that they had not received their medal for their tour in Somalia, particularly since it had been promised to them.

*What's the bottom line? What am I most upset about? We don't have medals after two years and three months. That's despicable. Most of us did nothing but be humanitarian and look after the Somalis. I'll put it in graphic terms for ya. When I receive the medal, I'm throwing it on the ground. I don't want it. It's like Korean vets. What are they going to do? Send it in the mail. Thanks a lot. If you're going to be ruled by political decisions, as it clearly is at this stage I'm not interested.*

*I feel very bad about the medal not being issued for Somalia. Hopefully it will come out soon. We know it's out. There's a design for it. I think it just has to be hammered and it will be okay. We should be recognized for the work that we did there. There was a few unfortunate accidents that happened down there but a lot of people did a lot of good work. Yes there are bad things that happened. Not everybody was responsible for that. It's not right. Definitely not right. A lot of good work was done and we should be recognized for that. A medal is usually a good way of doing that. One has been designed, has been approved and has not been issued. Every time we see important people we always ask about it. I can see them maybe waiting for the dust to settle down from all this. But there's no need to punish everyone for the death of the Somali.*

One soldier's wife said:

*The guys that went to Cyprus and sat on their butts, some of them got medals, while us, dealing with people throwing rocks, trying to bite and kick, we didn't. It's only a medal but you know I would like the guys to be marching with a medal so they can be proud too. The Airborne shouldn't be discriminated against. They work hard. They leave their families for six months and for what, to be torn down by the public and ridiculed.*

Myths are traditional stories (legends, heroic tales, etc.) of ostensibly historical events that embody the principles or world view of a group. They can explain a practice or belief, or tell the story of a group, its origins, its history. These often heroic tales tie members to glorious events in the past and make sure they never forget the sacrifice of those who went before. They also pass information about correct and incorrect forms of behaviour. Myths appeal to patriotism, instill confidence in the organization and make much of the history, tradition and declared aims of the organization. Military members pass their legends down through the generations and remember them in war museums. Loyalty, self-sacrifice, heroism, morality, manhood, duty, honour, tradition, power, superiority, etc., are all enshrined in mythic heroic characters and their deeds in battle. The civilian media also plays their role in the myth-making surrounding the combat soldier-warrior-hero (Enloe 1989, Gibson 1994, Miedzian 1991, Pleck 1981, Pleck and Brannon 1978, 1982, Theweleit 1989). Through the media, boys find out at a very early age that war is respectable. There are endless role models of great conquerors, heroic warriors and brave soldiers (Miedzian 1991: 33).

Storytelling is an important part of military life and in the stories are hidden meanings, underlying messages about correct and incorrect behaviour. According to Irwin (1993: 147) the NCOs' subculture is distinctively oral in character and style. In her study of NCO oral tradition, she remarked that messes were an important venue for storytelling for officers and NCOs out of hearing of other ranks. She also noted that storytelling by an NCO made the man more human to his subordinates thus building bonds with the soldiers. "He thus allies himself with the soldiers; he is one of the men, unlike the officers whose experiences are very different from those of the men" (Irwin 1993: 163). NCOs often tell stories about deaths and injuries and, according to Irwin, these stories fall into several categories which account for accidents: people following improper procedures, people following procedures in blind obedience rather than using common sense and the failure of an officer to listen to the advice of his NCO. Finally and most interesting for this report is that NCOs tell stories of the men, anonymously and in concert, turning on a senior NCO or an officer who is abusive, and Irwin cites two stories told about the Airborne in Petawawa:

When I was on my 6Bs [warrant officer qualifying course] we had a Patricia captain, he used to be Airborne, who was a real jerk. He dismounted us 900 metres before the objective and we had to fight through from there.... He was a real jerk. When he was in Pet (CFB Petawawa) his soldiers burned his jeep on the parade square. How's that for a hint (Irwin 1993: 165)?

...there was one time in Petawawa, in the Airborne Regiment, I wasn't there but, where they took — a Platoon Commander parked his jeep. He'd bought a brand new Renegade jeep there, a CJ7 and put it on the parade square and the troops went out and lit the thing on fire. Poured gas all over and torched it. Because the Platoon Commander was an idiot (Irwin 1993: 166).

Military culture also has a special technology. Simply put, no other organization in Canadian society has such a monopoly on fire power and war technology. According to Fotion (1990: 4): "Technology has put weapons in the hands of warriors so they can shoot faster and farther, do more damage, fight both day and night, and fight both under favourable and unfavourable weather conditions." Soldiers spend a great deal of time learning about the military's specialized technology and are continually practising and training with it.

## SOCIALIZATION

Moskos (1970: 64) uses the word culture for the military because "military personnel share something in common with their opposite numbers in the armed forces of other nations...which serve to differentiate them from their respective civilian counterparts." Part of the reason for this shared international military culture may be the diffusion of military practices. Military organizations copy from each other and this process is reinforced through the exchange of observers, information, advisors and through joint exercises, etc. (Spindler 1948: 88).<sup>1</sup> For example, the Airborne was involved in numerous combined operations and exchanged personnel with paratroop units around the world.

*We were obviously influenced by the major powers like the States, Great Britain and France who all used their airborne forces as a power projection. We even trained with them, so obviously their way of working and thinking about parachute intervention influenced us.*

Soeters also (1995: 8, 10) maintains that there is an international military culture as compared to civilian culture. Soeters based this opinion on a 10-country study which looked at variations among national military cultures. Although he noted that these militaries were similar to national civilian cultures in which they were found, Soeters (1995: 8, 10) found that, despite national differences, an international military culture exists. In an article describing military academies in Britain, France and the United States, Barnett (1967: 22-23) found that socialization into military culture is also similar.

Leaving aside the detail of curriculum and method, the essential and constant factor common to all three national academies is the indoctrination with tradition: potent emotional conditioning in military myths, habits, and attitudes. There are the physical symbols and reminders; engraved tablets of the glorious dead; the museums; the assembled iconography of illustrious graduates; statues; guns...there are song, slang, customs and ceremonies that link each annual class together for the rest of their army life, and to a slightly lesser extent link all old graduates.

Even in a country as heterogeneous as India where the social backgrounds of the soldiers reveal clear differentiation and heterogeneity, the professional socialization of the army makes soldiers share a similar culture and behavioural pattern, especially in relation to argot, dress, physical fitness and values of discipline, punctuality and loyalty (Parmar 1994: 187).



Members of the Airborne first joined the army as regular recruits, were posted to an infantry regiment and then applied to take a jump course. After successful completion of that course a soldier returned to his parent regiment (see below) and then applied to join the CAR. Airborne soldiers were first socialized in basic training and then in their parent units where military values were transmitted to them before joining the Airborne. Military socialization<sup>2</sup> occurs within structures specifically oriented to give the needed expertise according to the role pattern.<sup>3</sup> The educational format is defined by the institution, which disposes contents, means, methods and planning largely formalized and with low levels of discretion for the individual.

They make you feel dependent on it. Once you're in, they make you feel like you can't make it out there.... "You do what we want and we'll do everything for you". That's the attitude. "You can't do anything for yourself" ....Well, after a while it's just like a child with a parent. You don't want to disappoint them, you're afraid to. You don't know what the consequences are going to be, so you do it. You do what you are told (Canadian soldier quoted in Harrison and Laliberté 1994: 22).

In addition, "special procedures are performed in order to induce a strong normative compliance, such as community life, discipline, emphasized hierarchical authority, public as well as private behaviour rules sanctions" (Caforio and Nuciari 1995: 2).

*When you go to battle school you eat, drink, sleep and shit military. Once in awhile you get a weekend to go blow off steam but constantly military, military, military. And then when they get to a battalion they still have that AARRRR, heavy aggression. It usually takes a year to get them to mellow out into a system, to start to think first. When the new recruit come they're just like little tanks you have to move them in different directions. It's hard to make them think before they act. You ask them why did you do that "I don't know?" So that's my explanation of brainwashing in the military environment.*

Other words for this socialization process might be "enculturation" or "assimilation." According to Dornbusch (1955: 316), "assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a

common cultural life.... The unity thus achieved is not necessarily or even normally like-mindedness; it is rather a unity of experience and of orientation, out of which may develop a community of purpose and action."

In basic training, the military unit constitutes a total environment for the recruit as it encompasses so many different aspects of his life.<sup>4</sup> A curious aspect to this training is the emphasis on traditionally female activities such as grooming, cleaning, washing, folding linen, making beds, etc. Soldiers are rebuilt from scratch, *taught to be human* I was told.

*For a new guy, you start off at point zero. They teach you how to talk, how to walk, how to eat. They tell you what to say, what not to say, how to talk to a superior officer, what to do, what to look at, how to walk and how to dress. You walk together, run together, eat together, dress the same. So there's no individuality. And of course, you're on the base, so you all live in the same, small universe, cut off from civilian reality, cut off from how you used to live.*

One of my informants demonstrated to me carefully how soldiers are taught to clean the top of toothpaste tubes. Ironically, basic training is characterized by extreme isolation from civilian society on the one hand and an almost complete lack of privacy from other trainees on the other. Trainees begin as almost complete strangers to one another, although within just a few hours most begin to develop friendships with a bunkmate or two. The group is newly formed and offers little defence to the assault of initial socialization. Then, as recruits begin to rely on each other, strong bonds build — strong enough, the military hopes, that they will go into battle for each other. "A little private out in the trenches doesn't know beans all about why he is there, except he is there with his buddies and they will die for one another. It's as simple as that" (Canadian soldier quoted in Harrison and Laliberté 1994: 27). According to Brotz and Wilson (1946: 374) the complete severance of accustomed social relations finds compensation in part in the acquiring of "buddies." They noted that, in the army, this bond was so strong that "covering up for, defence of and devotion to one's buddy was expected." This form of loyalty can lead to stonewalling and the refusal to give up one's buddies to investigators. Thus group bonding is a double-edged sword. According to Janowitz (1974: 94), primary groups that are highly cohesive can impede the goals of military organization because they are informal networks. They only work when they are well articulated with formal authority.

In basic training, soldiers are expected to get along with their peers and meet the expectations of superiors. This is done by creating conditions under which maximal pressure is applied by one's peers to conform to the norms of the system. This is done by making the group responsible for each member and by having the rules and regulations of the system imposed and enforced by superiors (Rampton 1970: 16, 18). It may seem manifestly unfair to make the group suffer for the individual "every time a slow recruit messes up the entire platoon is punished with additional exercise" (soldier quoted in Ricks 1995: A4) but in this way the soldier learns to depend on his fellows and on the adequacy of their performance.<sup>5</sup> The extreme to which this can go is demonstrated by an event at CFB Gagetown where reserve officer candidates beat up, harassed and abused another candidate because the individual was messy and disorganized. "His bed was always poorly made and he got the others in his room into trouble. So they beat him up and harassed him" (Cotton, February 16, 1996, presentation to Commission of Inquiry).

The psychological and physical stress of the service environment appears to make the typical recruit more susceptible to socialization,<sup>6</sup> and the insulated military environment affords an opportunity to reinforce approved messages (Jones 1985: 162, 164). The soldier is progressively stripped of his civilian individuality<sup>7</sup> as he is moulded into a team player.

There is at least one social institution that can and does offer sufficient isolation from, and therefore effective negation of, competing world views: the military...the military (especially during that explicitly initiatory phase called basic training) provides the individual with a wholly circumscribed social universe whose parameters are clearly drawn with gates, barbed wire, and armed guards. Within the confines of the military post during this period, the "trainee" or "recruit" has no access to any "conversation" except that designed for his consumption by the institution. Deprived of any alternative sources of meaning, the trainee almost invariably adopts the frame of reference defined by his social context. He "goes native" in the very real sense of shedding a civilian world view and adjusting to the new meaning system demanded of him: soldier (Lewis 1985: 52).

In basic training the military view of the "mean world" (see above) is reinforced. This is necessary if the military is going to undo or at least loosen the basic civilian principle of the sanctity of life and the taboo against killing. Aggressivity is strongly reinforced.

*You take a guy when he gets here — long hair, no socks. He's in good enough shape physically, but that's about it. So you give him a certain look, the haircut, like everyone else. So he looks like a decent human being. And you give him challenges, challenges that he will succeed in. You train him physically, teach him to be good, competent, with his firearms, teach him how to play around with explosives, killing weapons, how to kill, how to have power. Then he'll have self-esteem. A guy like that, he's an ass-hole when he gets out and sees a civilian "Come on, I'm gonna blow ya' away," because he's been trained that way. They put a gun in his hands and showed him how to use it, taught him how to kill, how to injure, taught him that the only thing that counts are his teammates.*

*You're always incited to battle, to violence. Not officially. Never. Only by behaviour. Some guys are appreciated. They move up fast, do good work. But at some point they get aggressive. You try to control it and if people can deal with it, it's accepted, so long as it doesn't get out of hand. Then, it's too late. And you can't talk about it. Silence.*

*Well, soldiers are aggressive and they train to be aggressive. Now why wouldn't they go out and continue to be aggressive. First of all the difference between a rabble and an army is that an army is disciplined and they can be directed to do things and there are limits put on them. The total antithesis of a disciplined military is that people in their off-duty hours will go out and beat on the civilian population. That is indiscipline. The military instills discipline.... It's the individual discipline that's extremely important here. The problem is the idea of the warrior class. "We can do what we want to." This sort of warrior cult. "We can do anything because we are different."*

Recruits who are taught as civilians "thou shall not kill" are then resocialized and taught the most effective means of doing so (Lewis 1985: 59).

*The Airborne are trained to kill. Getting used to that is hard. They were a hard combat unit and they trained hard. An infanteer has to know everything about throwing a grenade or building road blocks or digging a trench.*

According to Lewis (1985: 54) this process is neither terribly complicated nor mysterious.



Once the individual is stripped of normal referents, virtually any reality that is sufficiently stable, predictable, and coercible - in a word, intelligible - will be embraced in the face of massive uncertainty. The basic training regimen exploits this basic sociological fact by implementing the necessary confusion and furnishing its antidote: a system of meaning that restores shape and coherence to the world.

Lewis' vision is not entirely valid. Recruits are not so easily brainwashed into new thinking. Recruits who volunteer for the army already have a predisposition for the combat arms<sup>8</sup> and soldiers who do not feel comfortable in combat will end up self-selecting into non-combat support work. Gaudet's (1983: 1) study of junior officers in the CF seems to point to an "*anticipatory* rather than a *formal, organizational* socialization effect." Cotton and Pinch (1986: 240) confirm that anticipatory socialization and self-recruitment play important roles in attracting recruits to enter the Canadian military. The likelihood of a family member entering military service increases dramatically in military families. Chevrier and Parker (1989: 35) found that non-commissioned member (NCM) applicants to the CF had an even higher percentage (58.8 percent) from military families than officer applicants (49 percent). In short, the matrix of social experiences before entry is a key factor in shaping the recruit's value orientation. Similarly, McNally (1991: 53) writes that combat arms were chosen by men in his study over combat support because of emphasis on the physical activity and challenge. Yet at the same time that the army promotes a combat image, the reality is that few soldiers will ever see combat. In fact, some soldiers are more oriented to their personal and career development: "For those who identify with the employee role orientation, the combat arms institutions, status claims and mystique have little relevance" (Cotton 1979: 89-90).

In addition to combat socialization, recruits are also taught core military values such as obedience, discipline, loyalty, truth, duty, valour and sacrifice. In fact, these are supposed to be some of the most important lessons learned if the recruits, particularly future officers, are to meet the high moral standards expected of them. Enculturation thus varies according to rank. Within the army there is a clear officer - NCM division. The military education/socialization of the two groups differs fundamentally. Officers are trained to be managers of violence while NCMs are the technicians of violence. "Officers are granted an elevated status and are indoctrinated in the tenets of the military profession. The focus of the NCM,

however is the effective handling and maintenance of weapons and associated equipment" (Parker 1995: 70). For officer trainees, much more emphasis is placed on leadership and allied skills than is the case with NCM recruits, where obedience and discipline are stressed (Rampton 1970: 49). This is essential if soldiers are going to learn how to obey orders.<sup>9</sup> But as Neill (nd: 5) points out, the unquestioning obedience to the orders of officers "is fundamentally contradictory to the injunction that soldiers are not compelled to obey an illegal order regardless of its source." Orders can be seen as unlawful based primarily on two criteria: the individual who gave the order did not have the power or jurisdiction to give such an order or the order is illegal.

There is also some debate in the literature as to whether army socialization actually changes people. For example, Bercuson (1996: 109) affirms that "the attitudes and values that a candidate brings to officer training are far more important in determining the degree to which he or she will embrace the military ethos than any socialisation he or she will be subject to at [CFB] Gagetown or elsewhere." At the very least socialization reinforces certain values and promotes group cohesion. Chatman (1991: 476), in a study of business firms, writes "selection contributes significantly to value congruence at entry, but regardless of selection, socialization experiences contribute significantly to changes in person-organization fit over recruits' first year." The Canadian army socializes members to its ideal (institutional) ethos of combat even though the majority of the army's members are in support and service roles. In fact, Cotton (1979: 53) noted that "the majority of personnel in uniform are only peripherally involved in the preparation for combat operations." He goes on to describe underlying tensions in the army between those with a latent role identity of employee and those with a soldier latent identity. For example, "those with a latent role identity of Soldier are more than twice as likely to reject the employment of women in the Combat Arms than those with an Employee role identity" (Cotton 1979: 85). Similarly, Cotton and Pinch (1986: 242-243) describe systemic tensions in the Canadian army between combat and support personnel dividing service personnel into soldiers, who expressed a strong institutional orientation, were supportive of the image of the combat soldier and combat institutions such as the regiment, were more reluctant to accept women in combat roles and more generally committed to the military; and employees, who expressed a strong occupational orientation. In this type of army, it is natural for some men to feel frustrated and unchallenged. Often, it is these type of men who would volunteer for the Airborne.

*The Airborne has a personality different than the infantry because Airborne are self-motivated. They are volunteers. They are a highly motivated group of people that think they are invincible. It's a fabulous feeling to be around people that are pushing themselves to the limit all the time, exploring areas in your psychic and your physical being that you just can't believe that you can do.*

Other types of men could end up in the Airborne as well, the misfits, the delinquents, the aggressive types who were not welcome in their parent regiments.

*The regular forces, that is the R22eR, The RCR and the PPCLI didn't always send their best men to the Airborne. If someone is very career oriented the CAR is not a good choice because he will be away from the parent regiment where his career development actually takes place. The Airborne was a little apart, disconnected, from the other regiments. Some members of the CAR were truly elite but on the other hand, when a regular unit wanted to get rid of its bad apples, they were sent to the Airborne.*

*I have a friend who is an infantry officer and I asked him about joining the Airborne. He said "I'll never do it because I know what kind of people they send there. I don't want to have to work with those groups" — in a sense that they were sending their worst case scenarios, the ones they couldn't control and the ones that had strange ideas. Who were very high strung, if you want. He said that — "I didn't want to have to work in that environment."*

*I can understand the unit commanders who wouldn't want to send us just their best men. Like a hockey team. The manager's not going to trade off his best players.*

According to Cotton (February 16, 1996 presentation to Commission of Inquiry) "[t]here is some evidence to suggest that through time the Airborne Regiment became a dumping ground for the problem children in the Regiments." The Airborne could be seen then as not just some sort of dumping ground but as a form of reform school. This is reminiscent of earlier times when boys were sent to the army to straighten up and become men.<sup>10</sup>

There is a high degree of second and third tours amongst NCOs.... You hear of officers and NCOs being given subsequent tours because they have the "reputation" of being the "airborne type", or because of an "only the Airborne can handle them" attitude.<sup>11</sup>

## REGIMENTAL CULTURE

At the heart of the Canadian army lies three regiments: The RCR (Royal Canadian Regiment), the PPCLI (Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry) and the R22eR (Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment). They are, in turn, divided into three infantry battalions. There are also armoured units such as the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), the Royal Canadian Dragoons, the 12<sup>e</sup> Régiment blindé du Canada and three artillery regiments: the 1st and 2nd regiments of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery and the 5<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada. These elements plus combat engineers and other units, are organized into the 1st and 2nd Canadian Mechanized Brigade groups, and 5<sup>e</sup> Brigade mécanisé du Canada (Bercuson 1996: 94).

The RCR was formed in 1883 and has been in continuous regular force service ever since. The PPCLI and R22eR were formed in 1917 and have also been in continuous regular service since. After World War II, in addition to these three regiments, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (QORoC) and the Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch) were kept active, and a new regiment called "the Canadian Guards" was added to the order of battle (regular). All regiments during and after the Korean conflict were maintained with two battalions each, with the Canadian Guards having four.

As part of budget reductions in 1969, the Infantry (regular) Order of Battle was reduced by disbanding the Canadian Guards and moving the QORoC and Black Watch to the reserve (militia) list. The three remaining (and original) regiments were increased to three battalions thereby absorbing about half the infantry from the three regiments that were downsized. The general logic at the time was that three would provide a sufficiently large mass to allow people to have careers in their own units (an occupational decision). There was also a regional distribution which would give a geographical identification according to west, central-eastern and Francophone Canada. This regional base also gives each regiment a certain character. This is also an example of the larger Canadian society, particularly its geographic, economic and social realities, influencing the military. This territorial base defines areas of recruitment, training and residence for regimental members. Recruits can request to be posted to one unit and if a place is available they will get the posting, for example, the Van Doos are majority Francophone from Quebec. There is also very little movement from one regiment to the other (LGen Fox, personal communication September 29, 1995).



Regiments transmit their traditions from generation to generation. Regimental lore is compiled in a regimental book which is the "bible" of regimental tradition. "A typical book will detail the story of the regiment's founder, the history of the regiment, its organizational structure, awards and honours, colours and dress, badges and other accoutrements, music and the order of mess dinners" (Bercuson 1996: 122-123). Young soldiers joining the regiment are indoctrinated into regimental history. For example, Bercuson (1996: 122) describes how for one week each year "junior officers of the PPCLI are given lectures from current and past serving officers or military historians about the regiment's founder, Sir Hamilton Gault, famous battles in both world wars, notable Patricias of the past, the regiment's operations in Korea, and home-defence tasks and peacekeeping." They also learn the structure of regimental associations, regimental traditions, lore and dress. Regiments also maintain museums honouring their glorious past. These museums contain historical artifacts and displays telling the regiment's history, in addition to rolls containing the names of members fallen in battle. Regiments also maintain their own archives containing such things as war diaries, photographs and documents concerning regimental history. Each regiment publishes its own history which junior members are expected to learn. (Bercuson 1996: 122).

Each regiment in the Canadian army has its own spin on the way it "does business." This distinctiveness is also marked by unique regimental insignia such as shoulder badges, buttons, buckles, colours of kit and distinctive tailoring of uniform, headgear and mess dress. Regiments have their own unique music and there are rituals and taboos associated with each regiment. For example, there are distinctive mess-dinner rituals and each regiment celebrates its "birthday" in addition to one or two famous battles from its past. The night Shidane Arone was tortured the members of 2 Commando were beginning their celebration of the PPCLI regimental birthday which is March 17. Kyle Brown tells us: "Be it in Italy during the Second World War, Korea, or on UN peacekeeping missions, March 17 has usually been celebrated with puerile enthusiasm and official indulgence" (Worthington and Brown 1997: 117). The eve of the celebrations in Somalia were marked by a relaxed and party atmosphere and increased consumption of alcohol.

The regimental system is founded on longtime associations, and generations of the regiment are brought together for these ceremonies at mess dinners, troopings, etc. The regimental subculture creates a common bond

designed to unite its members in friendship so they will give their lives for each other but it can also be “a pervasive and often unforgiving milieu within which all combat arms and most other Army personnel live their daily lives” (DND 1996a: 7-1/12).

According to former BGen Loomis (1996: 51) the regiment is a psuedo-kinship organization. (Also note in the following quote how BGen Loomis (1996: 45) describes the regimental system as a vocation or calling.)

The Regimental System...has evolved in Canada from ancient Greek or Roman models and their subsequent interpretation by British military forces. In essence, we are dealing more with a secular “religion” or calling than with a business, more with a family than with a corporation or union and more with a way of life than with a contracted set of obligations.

It is true that a regiment is often referred to as a “family” and the family nature of the system is underscored by nicknames such as “old man” for the CO and “auntie” for the second in command (2 I/C). When a battalion is out in the field on exercises the bivouac (the semi-permanent tented camp) is commonly referred to as “home” (Irwin 1993: 74). According to Cotton (1997), a regiment’s essence is tribal and corporate rather than instrumental and bureaucratic.

One is a member of a regiment for life. This link continues throughout a member’s career in the military and after retirement. According to Loomis (1996: 60), “the Regimental Family permeates all facets of one’s life from psuedo-birth as a new member to death.”

The timeless aspect of a person’s Regimental affiliation requires organization, not only while one serves with a unit, but also when one is extra-Regimentally employed or has left regular service. To accomplish this, not only are Regimental Associations needed, but also a formal means of communication is required between the various groups and individuals involved. Many devices can be thought of to provide these communications, including periodic newsletters and annual magazines, as well as Regimental ceremonies and functions which actually bring members together (Loomis 1996: 61).

A regiment influences the career advancement of its members through the administration of career assessment and promotion boards and recommendations to promotion boards at National Defence Headquarters

(NDHQ) (Bercuson 1996: 78-79). There are also a horizontal infrastructure of messes and an overarching advisory organization which is made up of regimental "elders." In addition to the official command structure, each regiment has a semi-official oversight and advisory entity known as "the Senate," the "Regimental Guard," "La Régie" or in slang terms, "the Godfathers." These groups are composed of serving general officers from the regiment and honorary appointees, such as retired generals from that regiment. The role of these advisors is to oversee the long-term well-being of the regiment.<sup>12</sup> In addition to the regimental senate there is a regimental executive which is responsible to the management of regimental business and is composed of the various commanding officers and often the regimental sergeant-majors. At the head of regiments are men and women close to the Crown, for example, the Queen Mother is colonel-in-chief of the Van Doos and Prince Philip is colonel-in-chief for The RCRs. Next comes the colonel of the regiment who is chosen from among the most distinguished members of the regiment, usually a former high-ranking officer who has been retired for several years (Loomis 1996: 57).

The colonel of the regiment is, in theory, just a figurehead; in practice, he is likely to be a whole lot more. It is very rare that any major plans for the regiment would be instituted by army headquarters without consulting the colonel of the regiment. His opinion is often sought by the battalion COs on personnel problems, morale issues, and ceremonial matters. Like the senior serving member, he can be an important lobbyist for his regiment in the higher echelons of the army (Bercuson 1996: 125).

The senior serving member is the highest ranking, currently serving, officer of the regiment. According to Bercuson (1996: 124) "senior serving members have no formal authority in the regiment. They are not part of the regimental decision-making structure, and they are certainly not part of the battalion chain of command." They are, however, very important to the regiment since they look out for the interests of the regiment. No matter how far up the chain of command they may be, the senior serving member is expected to put in a good word and to influence decisions bearing on the welfare of the regiment (Bercuson 1996: 124). Thus we see that regiments have structures of formal and informal authority which affect the functioning of the army.

The corporate nature of regiments has many advantages. The vertical chain of command assures that discipline is maintained and that informa-

tion flows freely through the system. There can also be disadvantages such as the development of a “we-they” attitude. As Granatstein (1997: 11) has noted “the regimental system has become a problem, a closed shop that too often pits one regiment against another, that rallies the generals from the regiment to secure key postings for favoured officers, and that can divide the Army with the argument that it is ‘our turn’ for some position.”

In addition, officers can develop an attitude of ‘looking after their own’ only. For example, the Board of Inquiry into Command Control and Leadership in Canbat 2 (DND 1996a: para 410)<sup>13</sup> noted “there was a widespread tendency for all personnel in the chain of command to concern themselves almost exclusively with their own subordinate commands. The command structure of ‘A’ squadron was reticent to concern itself with anything which occurred in the Engineer Sqn and vice versa. Although Army culture has inculcated officers and Sr. NCOs not to overlook a fault, there has been a growing tendency not to meddle in the affairs of others.”

As the Board noted there is a difference between overlooking a fault in someone who is not in your chain of command and minding one’s own business. Yet not reporting on other units can lead to the non-reporting of discipline problems. In addition, the corporate nature of army culture can lead to inclusiveness and disrespect for authority outside of the group. The Board of Inquiry felt that at the unit level in the army, “there has been too often the tendency to ignore criticism which comes from outside of one’s own unit or chain of command” (DND 1996a: para 411).

It is a well accepted axiom that a soldier’s regiment is his family. Many studies of battlefield stress and why soldiers fight have reinforced the notion that a soldier will risk his life for his comrades and for the honour and survival of his regiment. This issue is fraught with emotion. Many officers and soldiers spend their entire lives in a single regiment and they naturally become blind to many of its faults. Criticism of one’s regiment, especially from an outsider, then becomes tantamount to blasphemy and is not tolerated (DND 1996a: para 718). Another characteristic of the system is that bad news does not travel up. Thus, officers may be unaware of trouble in their unit.

*In a leadership position, the guys won’t tell you bad news. Cause the chain of command is such that your major is not going to tell you things are really bad down here. What he’ll say is we’re doing a bunch of investigations and checking things out here. As a CO that’s what you hear, unless the troops know that*



*you're going to find out some other way. So it's always been there, those kind of problems within the chain of command. Only good news goes up.*

In addition, information which may tarnish the reputation of the regiment may be hidden thus allowing the regiment to become more important than the whole (DND 1996a: para 719). Thus “whistleblowing” is perceived as going against the corporate nature of the military.

*There are some things you just don't talk about. I knew some guys who were taking drugs, but I didn't say anything. Being a stool pigeon is worse than being a homosexual. There's a climate of fear. It's better not to talk about certain things, for your own security. It's not as if they're going to kill you, but it's just something you don't do. It's like a code of behaviour.*

Whistleblowing goes against the traditional nature of the military which is to “not wash one's dirty laundry in public.” It is not well accepted to denounce wrongdoing to outsiders, particularly civilians. This attitude leads to what could be perceived as a wall of silence. Soldiers are expected to behave as a “family” — perhaps a dysfunctional one but still a family. As a parallel illustration, if one has an alcoholic sibling one does not go out into the street and announce it to the world. But in the military this concept of washing dirty linen “entre nous” can actually work against the chain of command if it is applied with too much rigour (DND 1996a: para 720). *Every unit likes to take care of its own dirty laundry. There's no regimental commander that wants to get up in front of the general. That's why we try to handle our own.* It is understandable that a soldier would want to keep any news of wrongdoing within his regiment.

*Guys'll stick together. They won't rat on anybody. But the other commandos are like that too. What goes on inside, stays inside. You have to belong. If you don't, well it's just too bad. It's your family. You have to live with them. These are the guys you're going to war with them. They're the ones who'll be covering you. You have to be able to trust them all.*

The concept of family is strong and it is reinforced daily. The following quote is taken from *CFP 300 The Army* (DND 1984). This is the first manual to provide land force doctrine for the period 1986-1995. In a letter to the reader found at the beginning of *CFP 300 The Army*, GHJ Lessard, MGen, Chief of Land Doctrine and Operations for the Chief of Defence Staff, tells us that it is “the army's keystone manual and thus the basis of all land force doctrine” (DND 1984: ii).

Briefly, the soldier must want his Regiment, his comrades and those around him to survive. The Regiment is his family, where he is not alone. It provides a situation in which his human needs can be met and thus, it is very important to him. As a consequence, the peril to the Regiment's survival from an attacking enemy becomes so threatening that the soldier's natural fear of loneliness and death, as well as his disinclination to take life, is less than his fear of losing those who provide him safety, security, a firm sense of belonging, affection, status and prestige, order, system and structure. The Regiment provides the opportunity for him to become the best soldier in the world; he fights for something more than himself; he fights for his comrades and the Regiment; and indirectly, for his home and his family (DND 1984: 3/7-3/8).

Because of the closeness, a regiment often has its own particular ways of doing things. This may lead to conflict and resistance when a commanding officer from another regiment attempts to do things differently. In addition, a commanding officer who is given charge of units from other regiments may allow those sub-units to behave autonomously. This may be a gesture of respect and confidence or a sign of disdain. Whatever the reason, the result is a breakdown in command and communication. As the Board of Inquiry into Command Control and Leadership of Canbat 2 noted "Benign neglect is still neglect" (DND 1996a: para 723).

Horizontal group solidarity is encouraged through various methods which encourage team work and group responsibility.

*You don't have any choice about it, you need your buddy. Especially during training, because there are inspections there too. Your buddy'll make sure that your locker is clean and if you don't have enough time to do something or other, then he'll help you out. It's so important, the buddy system. Two are always better than one. You've got no choice about it. Your buddy's always there to remind you to do this or that. They taught us that right off. It always works better, no matter what you're doing.*

Group loyalty and bonding is important during battle yet small group bonding can foster and maintain inappropriate norms.

*If you were in a fight or if you lost a fight, the next night at that place where you had been beat up you can be sure that 10 or 20 people from the same regiment would go there and destroy the place. That may sound strange to you but it was like a big family — the trust without asking ques-*

*tions. You would follow a leader without asking questions.... It was a family — one and all for one.*

Group bonding can even pose a threat to legitimate authority or undermine discipline.

*The pressure is so strong that beyond the group, right and wrong lose their meaning. Only the group matters — until it's just too much, and things start to come out on the outside. Like with Somalia. If it hadn't come out from the outside, it probably never would have come out. I tried to talk with some guys at that time. They wouldn't talk. Silence. If they talk, they're screwed. Somebody'll find out about it sooner or later. In the infantry, it's different. The group is smaller. You're trained for war, much more brutally, and you're isolated. No connections to the outside.*

Walls of silence are erected when the soldiers refuse to give up one of their mates. "Not only might a schismatic group of this kind foster and maintain inappropriate norms, but by assuring anonymity through norms of group loyalty and by imposing severe sanctions for violations of the solidarity norm, it can facilitate acts of subversion and defiance" (Wenek 1993: 20).

As we saw in the previous chapter, boundaries are maintained between the ranks even in the social sphere. Rank not only represents official status and position within the army but also influences, in large measure, relationships with others in the organization (McNally 1991: 2). "Messes" dining and social clubs are rigidly segregated (junior ranks, senior NCOs and officers) even on the smallest bases.

*In the forces, you have basically three different ranks and they each have a different place to go. You've got the officer mess. That's where all the ranked officers such as major to general go. You got another mess and that's for sergeants to chief warrant officers. Then you got another place for privates to master corporals. That's three lines that are quite distinct.*

In Calgary, the officers are served their morning coffee in china cups from silver coffee pots. Lunch is served in the mess by waitresses and mess stewards on china and silverware. The senior NCOs also belong to a mess where they eat lunch and also go for coffee, but it is served from large urns and still drunk out of china cups. The troops drink their coffee out of styrofoam, plastic or melmac cups and usually go to the Canex or loiter around the canteen or work-

place. The junior ranks' club is not a place for coffee; rather it is where they can buy alcoholic beverages while their meals are eaten in the men's kitchen (Irwin 1993: 68).

Messes are repositories of regimental tradition. Cases display regimental trophies and standards. In officers' messes one can find the all-important regimental silver and on the walls there are paintings of regimental heroes in battle. In the following description of an officers' mess dinner we can see how hierarchy, tradition and group allegiance are reinforced through ritual.

They invariably begin with guests gathering in the bar. The room is resplendent with colour and tradition. The jackets of the Canadian soldiers are usually red and adorned with medals, badges, and other insignia. There are striped pants, plaid pants, and kilts.... At exactly the posted time, a bugle is blown, or a tune played by members of the regimental band or the regimental piper, and the guests file into the dining room. The highly polished regimental silver sits on the tables. The guests sit in predetermined order, by rank, with the CO, the guest of honour, and visiting high-ranking officers at the head. The evening is managed by a PMC - the president of the mess committee - who introduces himself and calls upon the colour party to bring in the regimental standard. He then asks the padre to say grace, the guests are seated, and the meal begins. Certain subjects considered controversial are not discussed at the table. Dinner courses may be interrupted by toasts, music or short speeches, all according to established custom. After the meal, there will be the toast to the Queen and other toasts, the passing of the regimental port, the lighting of cigars, even the taking of snuff, all done in precise order and according to a pre-set timetable (Bercuson 1996: 123).

Within the mess, members can be socially equal but between the messes there is no mingling except for special occasions such as Sports Day or Christmas when one mess might invite members of another mess for a drink. In these clubs, members can drink and socialize with their peers. This social drinking in the messes is an important moment for the transmission of oral tradition among peers and from one generation to the next. The messes create an informal atmosphere where the transmission of military culture can continue. However, as Neill (nd: 13) points out, this can be detrimental if uncontrolled learning processes lead to the acquisition of undesirable behaviour patterns such as abuse of alcohol, risk-taking and non-directed aggression. "In the military, drinking achieves a ritualistic



form. The bar is the font of comradeship" (Lopez-Reyes 1971: 195). Being able to hold your liquor is also a sign of manhood.

*It's just part of the convention that goes with being in the military. I think people are socialized to drink in the military. There's pressure to show you're tough by some of the things that you do and some people bought into that and the peer pressure can be so strong. It's the type of unit that doesn't want a person that doesn't fit into the mold and drinking is part of it.*

Tolerance for drinking can lead to drinking "on the job." For example during Canbat 2 "[t]here was an implicit understanding at all levels that if the soldier was not falling down drunk that he should be quietly carried off to his bedspace by his peers to sleep off whatever intoxication he was under. The fact that he was at that point completely ineffective, should the operational situation require his skills, was simply ignored" (DND 1996a: 4-16/23).

On the base, there is a strong prohibition preventing rank groups from entering each other's messes unless it is a formal occasion such as officers being invited to the non-commissioned officers' mess at Christmas. The purpose of this segregation is to keep officers from developing friendships with their men which might compromise their authority.

*The officer sets the tone. It's not just an individual responsibility. It's a responsibility of all officers in a corps. If the officer is a slob, well, the message that is being passed down to others is that sloppiness is acceptable. If the officer is a coward then he passes on the message that cowardice is acceptable. So the behaviour of officers is very critical at all times and officers who do not behave sometimes for various reasons — circumstances in their personal lives and all that — it's the responsibility of senior officers to discipline them and remove them. The commanding officer has an even more critical position. This is why attention is paid to whom you put in as commander. Those that are appointed as commanding officers have a lot of responsibility for their own self-discipline. Commanding officers are not saints. They have the same urges as those who work for them. But those urges have to be controlled. Many things may be acceptable or may be tolerated from junior people. But it's unacceptable for the officer. If there isn't this distinction then the officer loses moral authority and his right to discipline. You cannot be drinking on Friday night with your men and on Monday morning parade them in front of you because they drank too much. It's just unacceptable. At times you*

*have to be social. You can't be also someone who doesn't associate with their men. There are times for an officer to go around to various tents but then you have to be careful, just have one beer and then leave. Don't sit around the fire camp getting smashed and telling dirty stories.*

Irwin has a very similar quote from one of the sergeants she interviewed who describes a platoon commander's inappropriate behaviour.

I've seen the man do some absolutely outrageous, outrageous things. The officers and the men cannot associate outside of work. They cannot. It just doesn't work. It just doesn't happen. I've seen it where this guy, and I never really understood why it didn't work until I saw it, and I worked for this man for two years...it was incredible. It was everything from lending soldiers his car to go to the bank and stuff, to going out with them to bars, to actually being in the shacks upstairs in soldiers' rooms, hanging out with them. And he's a Platoon Commander and it just doesn't work...I brought all this stuff in front of the Warrant Officer.... And the whole time I was saying it to the Warrant. And his eyes were just going like (pause) holy shit, especially the thing about being in the shacks. Because that is a big, big no-no. The duty officer, when he's on duty cannot even walk through the shacks without the BOS, the Orderly Sergeant that's on. They just don't go in there. They're not allowed in there (Irwin 1993: 70).

Rank also affects housing on bases (better quarters the higher the rank) and privilege (being able to jump a line). Harrison and Laliberté's (1994) research tells us that the boundaries between the ranks extend even to members' spouses who do not socialize with other wives across rank levels.

However, in the field, the rigid hierarchy and segregation between the ranks breaks down. In the garrison, the emphasis is on social distance and the ideal social structure is ritualized and thus internalized but in the "real world" of the field the necessities of combat eliminate the need for ritualized hierarchy. For example, no officer is saluted in the field for fear that he might be easily targeted by the enemy, and clothing norms are relaxed.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that the military has its own culture or way of doing things and that the regimental system constitutes a culture within a culture. This culture is learned through a socialization process which begins when a soldier enters basic training, and it continues throughout his military career.

In basic training recruits are assimilated into the military culture with its emphasis on institutional values, combat training and respect for authority. Basic training thus instills attitudes, responses and loyalties in the new recruit as it is teaching him new skills. However, basic training is intended to do more than impart basic military skills. It teaches the soldier that the military is a vocation, a calling. "I never looked at it as a job after boot camp," a Canadian soldier said. "It's a life" (Harrison and Laliberté 1994: 34). This said, we have to remember that while basic training reinforces institutional values, officer training has begun to introduce management training. These new ways of doing business may have led to a conflict in value systems in recent years.

Through army socialization men are reconstructed into soldiers through an enculturation process where group bonding plays an important part. One has to be a team player or risk ostracism. "To the ordinary civilian...ostracism may not seem such a horrible fate. So, if you get kicked out of one group, you can just join another, may be the reaction. But remember that a member of the military is not free to just join another group" (Peck 1983: 219). Coming from civilian society that elevates the individual, recruits are now in a world where the institutional value of the group is supreme (Ricks 1995: A4).

The military does things quite deliberately to intensify the power of group pressure within its ranks as recruits are taught the need for teamwork. Teamwork (cohesion) is seen as the only way a leader can marshall the capabilities of each individual member for the pursuit of a common goal. If left to individuals to decide for themselves whether or not or how to apply their skills, the objective of "seizing that hill" or "establishing that protective perimeter" would not be met. An army group, be it a section, platoon or battalion, and its effectiveness is the sum total of the effectiveness of its individual parts. It could even be argued that it is even a little more since, in the group, individuals can be exhorted to do more than they would otherwise do individually.

You have a bond. You have a bond that's so thick that it is unbelievable!... It's the pull, it's the team, the work as a team, the team spirit! I don't think that ever leaves a guy. That is exactly what basic training is supposed to do. Its supposed to weed out those who aren't willing to work that way.... And that's the whole motivation, that when somebody says we want you to do something, then you'll do it. You'll do it because of the team, for the team, with the team and

because the team has the same focus (Canadian soldier quoted in Harrison and Laliberté 1994: 28).

However, team building can have a negative effect.

*We're so connected physically and mentally, that if there's one person that we admire, who does good work, who gains the respect of others, of his superiors and colleagues, the others will group around him. If he incites his group to racist behaviour, they'll follow, even if they don't agree, because they won't distinguish themselves from the group. Because the group's all you've got. If you're in battle, no one else is looking out for you. You can't count on your family, they're in another world.*

Group bonding in the form of regimental allegiance continues to play an important role in the period after basic training in order to set the new military identity. The army puts much effort into encouraging an investment in the group, sometimes to the detriment of good order and discipline. It is also important to remember the potential contradictions caused by the regimental system itself, particularly the tendency to reinforce a corporate (regimental) identity where the group is more important than anything else, including the army, where constructive criticism is rejected because it comes from "outsiders," where units do not work together because they are from different regimental families, etc.

Another aspect of regimental culture which can lead to mixed messages is the importance of alcohol in the informal transmission of culture. According to the Board of Inquiry into Command Control and Leadership in Canbat 2, the consumption of alcohol has been part of army culture for many years. In the past, drinking was encouraged and sanctioned by compulsory happy hours, beer calls, parties, mess dinners and the sale of inexpensive alcohol in military establishments. "Not drinking or not attending social events was considered unacceptable in the mind of many" (DND 1996a: para 604). Admittedly, attitudes toward the acceptability of alcohol have changed in the last decade, and the army, "a conservative and traditional institution, has also changed in this regard but perhaps not as rapidly or extensively as society at large" (DND 1996a: para 604).

The use of alcohol is at times associated with a display of machismo in military subculture. According to Bray et al. (1995: 271-272): "heavy drinking and being able to 'hold one's liquor' have served as tests of suit-



ability for the demanding masculine military role.” Some of our interviewees summed it up as, *If you drink, you’re not a faggot* and *The drinking is part of the macho thing, It’s not OK, but when you are being initiated into a group, if you can’t do it you are a wus*. As the Board of Inquiry into Command Control and Leadership noted (DND 1996a: para 726-727): “Armies have used alcohol, and questioned the manhood of those who do not, for millennia.... Many of the most flagrant abuses of years past are gone, but the image of the hard-bitten hard-drinking soldier remains in the Army’s subconscious.” Some of our interviewees felt that heavy drinking was just a reflection of larger society.

*We’re Canadians. We’re hard drinkers. We’re not stupid either. I mean. Did people go over the two beer limit? Sure. But I’d rather have it out in front of me and making sure I can watch my troops ’cause I know who’s getting into trouble, than saying “no drinking.” Because soldiers are going to drink anyways or they’re going to make stills. Either they’re going to get it in the country or when they get their R & R. But they are going to drink. That’s reality. We’re just a reflection of society.*

Bray et al. (1995: 277-278) also noted that single men were more likely to drink than those accompanied by spouses. On missions overseas, men find themselves very far from the influence of their spouse.

Younger, unmarried, and in the lower pay grades were consistently more likely to drink heavily in the past month and to use illicit drugs in the past year than their counterparts. In addition, married personnel not accompanied by their spouses at their present duty assignments were consistently more likely to drink heavily or to use illicit drugs than married personnel accompanied by their spouses.

It is in the traditional watering holes of the army — the regimental messes — that much socialization and interaction occurs. Thus the army uses alcohol in order to pass on tradition. The army also tolerates a certain level of over consumption by excusing such behaviour as “letting off steam.” For example, the Board of Inquiry into Command Control and Leadership in Canbat 2 noted (DND 1996a: 7-10/12): “Soldiers have duties which are light-years removed from the mundane experiences of the average Canadian citizen. From time to time they may need to release the tension of their arduous lives by the use of alcohol.” Our interviewees had the same impression: *Alcohol, it’s just seen as something that would*

*help them ease their tension, frustrations and promote being a teammate.* Essentially, this is the pressure cooker approach to stress management: alcohol is used to release the pressure. However, there is another possible expression for this situation — chemical soup. Using the model developed by the famous socio-biologist, E.O. Wilson (1978), we must not picture stress as a fluid constantly applying pressure against the walls of its containers but rather as a pre-existing mix of chemicals that can be transformed by specific catalysts — like alcohol — if they are added at some later time. Thus, in this chemical soup model, stress and tension would not be relieved by alcohol, rather they would be ignited by it. According to Wilson: “We are strongly predisposed to slide into deep, irrational hostility under certain definable conditions. With dangerous ease, hostility feeds and ignites runaway reactions that can swiftly progress to alienation and violence” (Wilson 1978: 108). We will see that the consumption of alcohol was, at times, not well controlled in Somalia. Until the recent DND (1995c) publication of “Guidelines for Alcohol Consumption in Deployed Contingents,” there was little formal direction or guidance concerning the consumption of alcohol on missions.



The Canadian Airborne Regiment  
8 April 1968 - 4 March 1995

Forever Airborne!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, likely of the last commander of the regiment.

*LAST COMMANDER CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT*

Canadian Airborne Regiment insignia





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## CHAPTER FOUR

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### *Airborne!*

#### *The Para's prayer*

*Give me God, what you still have  
Give me what no one asks for  
I do not ask for wealth  
Nor for success, nor even health -  
People ask you so often, God, for all that,  
That you cannot have any left.  
Give me, God, what you still have;  
Give me what people refuse to accept from you.*

*I want insecurity and disquietude,  
I want turmoil and brawl,  
And if you should give them to me, my God,  
Once and for all  
Let me be sure to have them always,  
For I will not always have the courage  
To ask you for them.*  
quoted in Beaumont (1974: 77)

The results of our research have led us to believe that the conditions of training in the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) led to an "investment" in a warrior identity. This, in itself, is not necessarily a problem and can, in fact, prove to be very adaptive in a conflict situation where a sense of group identity and purpose is important to group cohesiveness, co-operation and, ultimately, group survival. However, if an individual, or group of individuals, were to become "hyper invested" in this warrior identity, they would do so to the detriment of other aspects of their personality which then become subordinated to this identity.

*Some guys are so brainwashed they just think of war: war, battles and combats. These are the guys that spend their whole pay on firearms. They only read about how to kill. They just watch TV, train and buy guns. I don't know what would happen if a guy like that were on a peace-keeping*

*mission. It depends on the guy. He could get mixed up and keep doing the same thing, even use it to ventilate his aggression, 'cause it's just got to get out.*

As the individual becomes progressively hyper invested in the group identity, his capacity to relate to others outside of the group becomes significantly diminished and the potential for xenophobia increases. Thus, the individual becomes enmeshed in his or her group and alienated from those outside of the group. Enmeshment can occur through a number of activities which suppress individuality and promote bonding among the members of the group. Again, this is very adaptive in a war situation where the self needs to be sufficiently alienated from the enemy in order to allow the soldier to live with the destruction of this enemy. However, this form of hyper investment in a combat identity and consequent alienation is not readily adaptive to a peace operation in a foreign culture where the host population can be perceived of as a threat and ultimately an enemy.

The Canadian army does not have the recent war history of its southern neighbour, nevertheless, it did maintain the Airborne as a rapid intervention force. The history of the Airborne goes back to World War II when Canadian parachutists trained and fought with British and American paratroopers. It was at this time that the distinctive headgear — the beret with the Airborne hat badge — the colour maroon and the logo of Bellerophone, the first airborne warrior, astride the winged horse Pegasus, were chosen to distinguish paratroopers from other military personnel. These traditional insignia continued to be used up to the time of the disbanding of the CAR. Bellerophone astride Pegasus was stencilled onto vehicles driven by the Airborne in Somalia and the maroon T-shirts are still worn informally in places such as CFB Petawawa.

This special "society" stood apart from the other army units in its commitment to the doctrine and values of combat. The soldier was separated from his normal references, that is, his regimental social environment and sent to special training in order to master the fundamentals of parachuting and rapid intervention. This training was accomplished in the early days of the Airborne in Edmonton until the unit was moved to CFB Petawawa — a more isolated environment. *Petawawa is a military base. You eat, live and breathe military. So much pressure, you can hardly breathe sometimes. The city is full of military. That creates a lot of pressure. It's a drag because you can't get away from it intellectually.*

Once established, organizational cultures often perpetuate themselves in a number of ways. Potential group members may be screened according to how well their values and behaviour fit in. Newly selected members may be explicitly taught the group's style. Historical stories or legends may be told again and again to remind everyone of the group's values and what they mean. Managers may explicitly try to act in ways that exemplify the culture and its ideals. Senior members of the group may communicate key values over and over in their daily conversations or through special rituals and ceremonies. People who successfully achieve the ideals inherent in the culture may be recognized and made into heroes. The natural process of identification between younger and older members may encourage the younger members to take on the values and styles of their mentors. Perhaps most fundamental, people who follow cultural norms will be rewarded but those who do not will be penalized (Kotter and Heskett 1992: 7).

The above citation describes the organizational culture of companies yet it is an apt description of the organizational culture of the Airborne. This section begins with a brief history of the CAR and goes on to describe how its members were self-selected into what they considered to be an elite unit and how their parachute and rapid intervention training reinforced this view and the value of combat. The Airborne was an inclusive society with its own culture, but one that was subject to vertical and horizontal tensions.

#### CANADIAN AIRBORNE REGIMENT

Canada's paratrooping history began in 1942, with the formation of the First Canadian Parachute Battalion, which became part of the British Sixth Airborne Division and fought with it in Northwest Europe during World War II. At the same time, a joint Canadian-U.S. unit, the First Special Service Force, or Devil's Brigade, was formed. This unit fought mainly in Italy and Southern France. Disbanded in 1944, the paratroopers from the First Canadian Special Service Battalion became reinforcements for the First Canadian Parachute Battalion, which, in turn, was disbanded at the end of the war.

Paratrooping was revived in the Canadian Forces (CF) in 1949 with the formation of the Mobile Strike Force. It consisted of battalions from The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) and the Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment (R22eR) (Van Doos) plus

support elements. This brigade was tasked with Canadian defence, particularly in the North. This is the origin of the emphasis on arctic training for the Airborne. In 1958, the Mobile Strike Force was drastically reduced, but 10 years later, in 1968, it was revitalized and the CAR was born.

The aim was to create a light highly mobile mini-formation capable of small unit or light formation operations in virtually any climate or geographic region in the world. It was to specialize in northern operations and maintain a high state of readiness for peacekeeping commitments. From 1968 to 1977 the 900-man CAR was based in Edmonton. According to the CAR's last commanding officer:

The Regiment's trademark for tough, fast-paced and challenging training was firmly established in the initial years. An array of exercises was conducted embracing Canada's West Coast, a variety of locations in the Canadian Arctic, Alaska and Jamaica as well as schools in unarmed combat, mountaineering and skiing (Kenward 1995: 1).

A soldier who had been on these training exercises described the experience:

*Arctic training.... We trained for arctic conditions. In case of war, you have to be trained. Canadians are probably one of the only forces that do that. We were the only ones who could survive hard conditions like Somalia in the desert or in Churchill or Frobisher Bay. We had to be able to fight in the winter weather in case of a war with the enemy coming from the north. We had to be able to survive with just our kit and a map. To be able to go straight to where we were supposed to go. It was the same thing for the desert. We trained in Texas and in Kansas — how to read a map, how to survive. Again, just in case of conflict. It's a kind of training that's good too. Even if you think not. It's a challenge to see if you are man enough, if you can survive on your own. You discover you have the strength that you are a man — not just by drinking but by discovering your courage.*

In the early 1970s due to pressures to have equal representation, the Airborne acquired a Francophone commando unit.<sup>1</sup> In the 1970s, all commandos worked and mingled together in Edmonton, even the Van Doos. The 1970 October crisis was the first test of the CAR in operation, and the unit performed a number of internal security missions in Montreal. At the same time the CAR was still a UN standby unit. The commandos mobilized in 36 hours to go to the Middle East but were not sent. However in



1974 1 Commando was sent on a rotation to Cyprus. After the Turkish invasion the rest of the unit joined 1CDO on tour. This earned the unit two Stars of Courage and six Medals of Bravery but the price was over 30 casualties and two deaths. In 1976, the CAR was again deployed to Montreal this time as security for the Olympic games.

In 1977, the unit was moved to Petawawa. According to Kenward (1995: 2) this was a watershed event. Significant structural changes occurred, including a reduction in strength and loss of independent formation status. Our interviewees also felt there had been a significant change: *When the Airborne moved to Petawawa it really hurt their pride. A lot of people said that they wouldn't go to Petawawa.* Further change was imposed with the creation of three rifle commandos, around the three parent regiments: The RCR, PPCLI and R22eR. One Airborne Headquarters & Signal Squadron and One Airborne Service Commando were also created.

*Up 'til 1977, the Airborne's infantry component was represented by two commandos — 1 Commando which was manned by R22eR (Van Doos) and 2 Commando which was manned by the PPCLI and RCR. From 1977 on, the Regiment had three commandos — 1 Commando, 2 Commando made up of PPCLI only and a new 3 Commando made up of RCR. The commandos were essentially broken out along regimental lines.*

Some of our interviewees felt that the purpose of having the three commandos was so the regiments could track their own people and thus control promotion and performance evaluations.

*When the commandos moved to Petawawa, 2 Commando just had Delta Company and Echo Company and their Echo Company became 3 Commando. They would try to post all RCRs into 3 Commando, and all the Patricias into 2 Commando. But the Patricias serving in Echo Company remained in 3 Commando and the RCRs in 2 Commando remained as well, until it was their turn to be posted out. One reason is that it's easier for the career managers to man and deal with their own regiment within one commando.*

In 1981 and 1986, the CAR did two more tours in Cyprus. In 1991, the CAR prepared for a UN deployment in Western Sahara but did not deploy because the mission was cancelled. A year later the Regiment was again downsized to a battalion structure of 665.

*The regiment underwent several transformations over its history both in basic structure and size. In the early '90s it changed from a regiment to a battalion. This process started just prior to the Somalia deployment. This particular change in the organization was fairly substantial and thus presented an added challenge to the Airborne as it tried to get ready for a demanding peace enforcement operation. Having said this, the Airborne is supposed to be able to adapt quickly and maintain its operational readiness. The overall success of the mission in Somalia proved it could adapt and perform despite structural turmoil.*

The commanding officer (CO) went from being a full colonel to a lieutenant-colonel and the officers commanding (OCs) — majors — became just company commanders under the authority of the CO.

The command structure of the Canadian Airborne Regiment changed in the summer of 1992. It went from being commanded by a full Colonel, with the powers of a commanding officer, to being downgraded to a sub-unit commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. Each of the Commandos, in the summer of 1992, were commanded by a Commanding Officer, a Lieutenant Colonel. In the summer of 1992 they became Officers Commanding. They were Majors and had no powers of punishment. There is a difference between being a Lieutenant Colonel, Commanding Officer or being an Officer Commanding as a Major.<sup>2</sup>

This represented a considerable loss in power and prestige for the unit.

*I suspect that the downsizing affected the Airborne. They downsized it by reducing the number of commanding personnel. So does it have an effect? Sure, anytime you take away a position of status and power, the influence you have and the prestige that you carry with that is similarly reduced. It has to be. And that's because we have an organization built on visible hierarchy.*

Immediately after downsizing began, the CAR went on its last mission to Somalia (except for a platoon which was sent to Rwanda). When it was deployed to Somalia, the unit had to be augmented with additional personnel (such as medics, engineers, etc.) thus becoming the Canadian Airborne Battle Group (CARBG). The commanding officer of the CARBG was the CO of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. Following considerable public reaction to the events in Somalia and disclosure of certain "hazing videos" the CAR was disbanded and in March 1995 the Airborne's colours were laid up amid much emotion at Petawawa.

To the end the Canadian Pegasus flew high with dignity, spirit and unchallenged devotion to the Airborne cause. Let there be no doubt, there has never been a more committed and more worthy soldier than the Paratrooper. For 27 years those soldiers were the Canadian Airborne Regiment - the spearhead and embodiment of the fighting spirit of the Canadian Army. That spirit will never die! Airborne! (Kenward 1995: 4).

## AIRBORNE SUBCULTURE

Culture is a social force that controls patterns of organizational behaviour. It shapes members' cognitions and perceptions of meanings and realities. It provides affective energy for mobilization and identifies who belongs to the group and who does not (Ott 1989: 27). As in the other army regiments, the Airborne had its own distinctive subculture where abstract ideals of brotherhood and harmony, love and union, sacrifice and co-operation, loyalty and discipline, were translated and formulated into concrete aspects of style. They were manifested through a variety of symbols and symbolic patterns, and created a definitive and specific pattern of work and life (Parmar 1994: 152). An examination of the CAR subculture using the schema developed in Chapter 3 to examine cultural artifacts follows.

Initiates learned Airborne history during the Airborne Indoctrination Course (AIC) (one of the Regiment's socialization mechanisms). Soldiers were taught a sense of duty and debt to the past, to those who had fought and died in previous wars.

*When you hear about Airborne, it's the pride that strikes you. It goes back to World War II, Normandy and all that. They land and they're already upon the enemy and fighting. You never know what's going to happen. It's really something when you get to thinking about it, just jumping out of a plane, you know you've been there.*

For many years, the CAR organized an indoctrination course run either by the Regiment or the Commandos on their own. When the AIC was run by the Regiment, it was a method for ensuring that all newly arriving members were trained to one common standard but after the Commandos began organizing their own AIC, there was some variety in the way the course was run. It was essentially a review of military and parachute skills (weapon handling, shooting, first aid, demolition, unarmed combat, rap-

elling, etc.) Because of the emphasis on physical fitness in the Airborne, the AIC had fitness tests (swimming, running) and drills. The AIC was an opportunity for a soldier and an officer to show that they can be a member of the group — trustworthy.

*For the young guys, it's a question of gaining confidence and showing the others that they can do it. For the older guys, it's like they check out the younger guys to see who they feel they can trust. You have to be able to trust the guys you're jumping with. Anybody in your group can be checking your equipment, so you have to be able to trust everyone.*

*You're always being tested and if you screw up on the AIC it will come back to haunt you. Because even if it was just a small gang in the woods, news would come and go. They'd know. So for an officer, it was an important time, they'd be testing you, to see what you're made of. If you made it through that week, you'd be okay for the rest of the time, so long as you didn't screw up. So it's a very important week for an officer. He's got to be on his toes.*

At the end of the AIC, there would be a ceremony where new members would receive their Airborne coin — an important symbol of group membership. If someone dropped out of the AIC because of an injury, he did not receive his Airborne coin.

*In the '70s, they created a kind of coin with the Airborne regiment crest on one side. And anytime you were going to some place, anywhere in the world, somebody could challenge you to prove you were in the Airborne you had to show your coin. If you weren't Airborne, you didn't even know the coin existed. It was a pact, a secret code. If you were in danger you could show the coin and people would help you. It was like a secret code we had for the Airborne.*

Because of its unique parachute technology, CAR had its own special acronyms such as DZ (drop zone), LAPES (low altitude parachute extraction) or LVAD (low velocity air drop). There were also unique names and words. For example, Wainwright was called Rambo land in *The Maroon Beret* magazine.<sup>3</sup> As seen in the earlier quote by Col Kenward, written letters, articles, speeches, etc. ended with the word "Airborne!" instead of the usual "yours truly" or "thank you." We also noticed on some correspondence that French members of CAR would write "Commando! Prends garde." Airborne also shared linguistic habits such as the artillery expression of using the word "seen" to signify "I hear and understand."



*They had special ways of speaking. If someone was making some statement about the Airborne, which was fairly often, they would say "Hooah." For example, the sergeant might say we have to push the truck out of the ditch because the tow truck couldn't come here, and after all we're Airborne, and everyone else would say "Hooah" together. Or someone in the group would say, Airborne! and the others would all say "Hooah!"*

*Another example: when you are telling me something and you're looking at me for confirmation, you give me eye contact and you nod your head and you say OK to show me that you've got the message, but an Airborne soldier would say "seen." "You have to have your pack, and you have to have your webbing, you have to have your rifle, two grenades, smoke grenades, first aid pack, are there any questions? No questions. Are you prepared for this?" — "Airborne! Hooah!" — "Oh yeah it's at 9:30." — "Seen."*

### *Rituals*

There were many rituals and ceremonies (formal and informal) associated with the Airborne. All new members of the Regiment (regardless of rank) would be "cammed" on their first jump with the Regiment. I was told that it began in the 1980s, a tradition picked up from the Americans. Camming entailed covering the person's face, head and hands (all exposed body parts) with camouflage crayon. The crayoning was carried out by the other members of the group. It was somewhat painful, although not intolerable, however it was somewhat annoying since the camouflage crayon was hard to wash off afterward. The camming would take place just before the jump when the initiate(s) would be grabbed by fellow jumpers who had already passed through the experience. The "war paint" would be worn throughout the jump and then could be removed.

*The first jump I do with a unit is what they call a cherry jump. The type of things you do for a cherry jump is, you're the only jumper to wear a red helmet. And you're usually camouflage painted by members. Everybody will go through and they will cam you. You usually have to stand there with your hands behind your back or at your side. But you're not allowed to interfere with the camming procedure that's going on. Some of that camming will go hard on your face. You know it's rubbed in. It's scrubbed in. In the ears, in the nose. Cam paint is slapped on very generously and that's a ritual that is still practised to this day.*

*I was body cammed on my first jump with the Airborne. Again, that was tradition — nobody got hurt — all you had to do was take a little bit longer shower.*

*If you arrive before the Airborne Indoctrination Course and do your first jump with the Regiment, then you'll get cammed from head to toe, everywhere, on your stomach, in your hair, whatever. And anyone can do it to you, whoever thinks of it first. But if you do your first jump while you're on the AIC, count yourself lucky 'cause you won't be cammed, because the AIC jump is an exercise jump and you're already painted anyway, but a lot less than if you were cammed. You won't have it in your hair and all that.*

Learning to drink is part of the initiation rites common to all armies, usually followed by fighting (Ambrose 1992: 19). Some of the interviewees agreed, *Oh yeah, the maroon berets are show-offs. "I'm a real man. A man's man. I wear my wings and my maroon beret." When you get older things change. But in the beginning it's fights all the time, women, drugs. Lots of booze. Initiations. You drink and drink.*" In 1985, the Hewson Report (Hewson, 1985: Annex H and p. 20) found twice the number of assault cases among the CAR than in any other unit and noted that drinking was high in Petawawa. Our interviewees agreed: *I think alcohol is a big problem. A big issue within CFB Petawawa. Drinking and driving was a serious problem on the base.* The 1993 Board of Inquiry suggested a relationship between heavy use of alcohol and incidents of insubordination by members of 2 Commando. Pte Grant testified to the Board of Inquiry that soldiers in 2 Commando lost control due to the consumption of alcohol.

A lot of guys, once alcohol is consumed, lose their self-discipline a lot. And myself included, yes, I'll say pretty much the majority of the Commando.... I think it's just...like when it happens is because a lot of stress in the job, when we drink we kind of drink hard, and that some of the guys go a little overboard...when the guys release, they kind of go all out (Pte Grant to the BOI Vol. V, p. 1142).

As noted in the previous chapter, drinking is an important aspect of masculine identity. In the military real men can drink and hold their liquor. In the Airborne beer calls and deck parties were routine occurrences.

*After a week's work, the group'll get together some place and have a beer call. That's where we can really talk, we've always got something to say*

*to one another. It's a place where we can all relax, because no matter how you look at it, the friction builds up in this work. Here, we can say anything and not worry about who's listening, we don't have to be in uniform. It does us good.*

Drinking allowed men and officers to get together and contributed to a sense of bonding.

*Like, the last time, it was a major who got the beer call going. He bought a case of beer, 'cause when you're new or when you change groups, that's what you do. Everybody likes to have a beer when the Major's buying a round. It creates an atmosphere where like, I could talk to the Major, make a joke, still respecting him, and it would be alright. It's open. It's not like we're working, or doing something serious. It's like we're buddies, not just private, sergeant and corporal, but buddies.*

### *Initiation Rites*

Much has been made of 1 Commando initiation rites in the media. A detailed analysis of these rites would be an anthropological paper in itself. Very briefly, the videos were of initiation rites not hazing. Hazing is technically continual abuse over an initial entry period into an organization such as the first year of cadet school or the few first weeks or months of membership in a college fraternity. Hazing has a long tradition in military academies. The U.S. Secretary of War (1908: 63) Board of Inquiry into hazing at Westpoint in 1908 noted that the practice had been going on since the 1860s. Interestingly, a study by Aronson and Mills (1959: 157-158) showed that the more severe the rite of initiation the greater the bonding to the group. It is not surprising that members of 1 Commando were unwilling to talk about their initiation to authorities.<sup>4</sup>

“Perhaps the best example of how difficult it can be for those in authority to get to the bottom of what goes on in a hazing is the case of Douglas MacArthur. When he was a ‘plebian’ or ‘plebe’, at West Point at the turn of the century, MacArthur found himself in a hazing controversy and was commanded to testify at a congressional court of inquiry following the death of a cadet in a hazing incident. MacArthur “steadfastly refused to name the upperclassmen who had hazed him, yet he tried to appease the select committee by giving them the names of several men who had already quit West Point for one reason or another” (see Nuwer 1990 for details).

Hazing and initiation occurs around the world and in countless organizations from engineering and medical student groups to football teams and military academies. Many interviewees were quick to say that the 1 Commando ceremonies were not so bad and besides everyone else does it too.

*Why do fraternities and universities have hazing? Why do hockey teams have hazing? You know. Hazing is something that has been a part of not only the military but a lot of different social groups. I think the timing was very bad for it to be seen on TV.... for the Airborne Regiment. Very bad timing.*

*Soccer team parties at university are a lot worse than what's on those videos. I don't see what the big problem is. It's pretty bad when the Canadian government has so little spine that we lose a whole regiment 'cause of a few stupid parties.*

U.S. forces are known for hazing and initiation rites such as the infamous Neptune ceremony where sailors dress up in drag and carry out certain activities the first time they cross the equator. Marines capture recruits and tie them up with duct tape and put boot black on their testicles. Army soldiers posted overseas drink disgusting concoctions. Similarly, a French officer was surprised when the Airborne was disbanded following the public airing of their initiation rites since when he joined the French forces he had to fornicate with a goat. There are countless stories and many tragic deaths associated with hazing (see McCoy 1995, Nuwer 1990, United States General Accounting Office 1992a).

The videos of the 1 Commando rituals establish clearly that they were rites of initiation with the three classic phases of separation, liminal inversion and reintegration associated with such rites. The separation phase was the moment when all initiates are "levelled" i.e., made alike. Their hair is shaved, they are all in the same Airborne T-shirt. Note that no initiators are dressed like that. As the initiates become progressively dirtier their initiators remain immaculately clean. The initiates are thus separate and the same. This is followed by a series of acts designed to humiliate and further reduce the collective of initiates to the state of ritual death. In this ritual, soldiers are proving their readiness to participate in the group regardless of the personal cost. In this case they were not "ritually killed" as often happens in other cultures rather, they were dead drunk and if they weren't falling down from drinking they were falling down from dizziness after turning around and around on a stick. They were also encouraged to



vomit by their initiators — a ritual poisoning and purge. This is primarily accomplished by the passing of a wad of bread from initiate to initiate. But between initiates the “boulette” is vomited and urinated on, thus turning it into a method for provoking vomiting in the initiate who must chew it. Also at the party:

*The priest or chaplain came and blessed the St. Michael's Mainz. Which is sort of a charm for soldiers who are Airborne. Then we give it to the new people. The soldiers, they line up, and we have a little prayer and then they get their St. Michael's medals.*

It is interesting to note that the soldier who would obviously stand out and not be just like the others — Cpl Robin (a Black man) — was singled out for special treatment. This is consistent with other reports of similar initiations where there is extreme pressure to “level” all participants. While Cpl Robin was doused in flour, some of his White associates were rolled in mud. Again the inversion and parody of this liminal period are highlighted black becomes white and white becomes black.

*It's the pride of belonging to a group, like in schools and universities, a rite of passage, but no one makes you do it. No one gets beaten or shaken up. What happens is that they'll pick on some personal characteristic. Like if you're Black, they'll paint you white, but being Black is not the problem.*

Another important event in the liminal period are events involving urine and feces. It is extremely interesting that such a homophobic society as the Airborne would do things which are often associated with homosexuality (feces are “scat” and urine “golden shower”). This parody of homosexuality is further emphasized by soldiers dancing erotically with each other, men in drag and mock sodomizations.

Initiates become like babies. They are bald and some eventually end up almost naked like a newborn. They cannot feed themselves and are fed beer and alcohol by others. There is an abdication of personal responsibility to the initiators. The initiates do what the initiators ask, trusting them with their personal safety like children. For example, initiates give themselves electric shocks trusting that the dose is not harmful and they leap blindfolded from a table without knowing the exact height. In this way the young initiates practice and re-enact in parody the abdication of responsibility to superiors which takes place in the military. In the Airborne, soldiers

will be asked to do the bidding of their superiors without question even when it puts their person at risk. They will be asked to leap from airplanes, trusting in their superiors to let them out of the plane at a safe altitude and to spot them in the right drop zone. This trust is reinforced by the statements of the initiators such as "We take care of you, no where else will people take care of you the way we do." Cpl Robin testified to the Commission of Inquiry as to how he was cared for — glass was taken away so he would not be hurt when being walked on the ground like a dog, and ropes were loosened so as not to bind his hands too tightly to a tree.

It may seem incomprehensible to an outsider that the initiates actually participated voluntarily in all this. The importance of the ritual is in part a reflection of the nature of the unit at this stage. Initiates are strangers to each other and to the Airborne, and the bonding of the initiation pulls them together in a very short period of time. Perhaps the initiations were more severe in 1 Commando because of its minority position as a French unit at a predominantly English base such as CFB Petawawa.

1 Commando was not the only commando with initiation rites. 2 Commando practised the "Zulu warrior" which I was told came from the Brits.

*The Brits picked it up the Zulu warrior thing in the Boer War in the 1900s in South Africa. They adopted this dance they called the Zulu warrior.*

*Now the Zulu warrior, our soldiers picked that up from the Brits. That was going on for awhile. At the end of battle we'd get together, the Canadians and the Brits in a big party. You'd always see the Brit by the end of the night doing the Zulu warrior on top of a table. He'd challenge the Americans, What can you do to beat that? Then the Canadian would come out, and say: This is soldiering. This is what soldiers do. But it's not hazing or all the rest of that. I never heard of that going on.*

*The Zulu warrior would happen spontaneously during a party or after an AIC. My interviewees were convinced that someone who did not want to participate would not be ostracized, however, one wonders if participation was not encouraged in order to prove daring and gain prestige and acceptance.*

*The Zulu warrior thing was spontaneous. For whatever occasion, they'd go down and buy some beer and they'd put it in the shack and the troops*

*would start drinking it. That beer would go pretty quickly, two-three cases of beer and 110 guys don't last very long. So we'd pass a hat and collect more money and get the guys that weren't drinking to drive down to the liquor store. So then we got over 30 cases of beer. So they start drinking and about half way through someone would say: Hey let's get the new guys they're gonna do the Zulu warrior. And that's basically how it ended up going on. It wasn't a formal thing. I remember one guy who wouldn't do it. No one thought any less of him for it. It wasn't like you have to do it or be ostracized.*

*Each unit after they have their AIC, they have a party, each unit had something different. Like 2 Commando had — a canoe party or porch party. They found an old canoe in the Ottawa river — filled it with ice and everybody that came brought a case of beer or whatever. They'd play out the Zulu warrior thing tradition every now and then. But each unit sat and drank beer and basically had a normal party. But as for all those hazings and all that, I spent many years there and I never saw somebody get razed if they didn't want to do something. You get the normal name calling when it first happened but the next day it was all forgotten.*

The Zulu warrior consisted on dropping one's pants, standing on a chair, having a length of toilet paper inserted in your buttocks. The paper is then ignited and you have to down a beer and pull out the paper before you scorch your bottom. There were various versions of this rite, such as two men on chairs and one piece of paper joining them. The middle of the paper is ignited and may the best man down his beer first. Danger (fire), heights (Airborne), alcohol (a real man), and anal fascination (mock homo-erotic behaviour).

*They'll jump up on the table to some music or whatever. All of a sudden toward the end of the night, someone would say: "I have the nerve now I'll jump up on the table and do the Zulu warrior." Whether there is mixed company or not, I've seen them do it. And just start dancing on the table and start taking their clothes off, and then end up with someone giving them a piece of toilet paper or something. And they'd end up with this piece of toilet paper attached to them somehow, and of course somebody would light it on fire while they were dancing around on the table. And everybody would sing the song Zulu warrior. There's a song. It goes like, "Haul him down you Zulu warrior, haul him down you Zulu chief, Haul him down you Zulu warrior." I think they repeat that twice. "Haul him*

*down you Zulu chief," and then everybody starts yelling, "chief, chief, chief" together and then somebody lights the thing on fire. Usually there are two of them. So there are two guys dancing and the thing is that this toilet paper is burning, and it's supposed to be who pulls it out first sort of thing, before they get burned. Who's got the most nerve. Everybody's standing around clapping or singing a song. Two guys try to outdo each other usually. And then somebody usually lights the toilet paper up higher, and a hand will come out of the audience or something and light it up higher and watch this guy burn so. So the next day the guy wakes up not only with a hangover but he's got a burnt butt to deal with too.*

New men were also subjected to a kind of "cold shoulder treatment" during the first months of their stay in 2 Commando. This would be considered hazing.

See when you come to the Commando, you're an FNG, you're not a new guy, you are a fucking new guy, that's how you are treated for six months. No one talks to you, no one is your friend, you do what you are told and you carry on. You're told to do this, by whoever, you do it. Now, if people want to get in, what they generally do, in any circumstance, they try their best to please (Testimony of Pte Grant BOI: 864-889).

Pte Bass testified to the Board of Inquiry that a few guys from 3 Commando would get drunk and burst into a FNG's room (fucking new guy) and wave guns around to scare the hell out of him. 3 Commando seemed to have other forms of bonding. For example in Rwanda, following Somalia, members of 3 Commando had to be hospitalized for cutting their wrists too deep in a blood brother ritual.

*A platoon, I believe, from the 3 Commando was sent to Rwanda to provide security. It was a defensive security platoon which is essentially guarding a certain perimeter. They were not deployed as a unit, just a platoon, 30 men under a captain. And two events took place. First one is one of the members of that platoon committed suicide while, I believe on Christmas night, of all times. I believe there was drinking involved, while I'm not sure. But anyway he was a member of that platoon. Also there was a shooting incident, in that members of the platoon, while guarding a nunnery were drinking and decided to shoot off their weapons into the air. I think it's at that event too, that they decided to do a blood brother ceremony. Where, if you like some one very much, he becomes your blood brother, kind of an*



*Indian ceremony where you slash your wrists and mix your blood. Now you have to put things in context. You have to remember all the horror of Rwanda, general lawlessness, who's right, who's wrong. Difficult living conditions because a lot of things did not work or were shocking, that kind of stuff. But again the disturbing part is the presence of alcohol.*

It could also be postulated that the weekend of the pyrotechnics display in October 1992, when soldiers set off thunderflashes, smoke grenades and a flare on the base in Petawawa and then went on to party with stolen thunderflashes and personal weapons in Algonquin Park, was a form of rampage initiation rite. Alves (1993: 897) describes rampage initiation rites as a form of "improv" initiation rites where antisocial behaviour is used to express one's marginal condition. Street gangs in Los Angeles thus prove their daring to each other by committing crime and recounting heroic tales of their daring to their comrades afterwards. The pyrotechnics and other events such as car burning took place on a weekend of extensive drinking.

Soldiers who were not able to meld into the Airborne group identity were excluded. It was said, in an interview, that those who do not "fit in" to a commando unit were soon sent to mortar platoon. Pressure is on to be part of the group but the rewards are great. Ambrose (1992: 19) tells us that the result of these shared experiences is a "closeness unknown to all outsiders. Comrades are closer than friends, closer than brothers. Their relationship is different from that of lovers. Their trust in, and knowledge of each other is total."

*Most regiments are tight, but the Airborne was more so. Even disbanded they were a family. They really took care of you. They were out for their men.*

*We were a very tight knit. You always have to cover your buddy, your buddy covers you. You have to look after each other no matter what. Even if you are partying downtown, if he gets out of line or gets in trouble it's your job to get him out.*

*Camaraderie was so close it wasn't funny. It was almost like you'd been working with those guys for years, because you would see them day in day out. It kind of made things easier because you didn't have to explain what you wanted because three quarters of the time he already knows what you want and it will get done. There was also a lot of peer pressure to spend our free time together. Say a sergeant would want to go shooting he would*

*take his entire section with him. He'd say screw the wives but I didn't like that. Come Friday I said "See you on Monday. I'm on my own time." But in a few instances it wasn't looked upon that lightly. If you didn't go to the platoon smokers (parties) it was frowned on. If a guy did all that they wanted, he got all he wanted, promotions, the courses he wanted, but he was never home. He went partying with them constantly, fishing whatever.*

Like other Canadian regiments, the Airborne had its unique badges and symbols and this set soldiers apart. *No, look, I've got a maroon beret, I've got a badge, I've got my parachute gear. You don't wear that.* In fact, there are so many official badges and insignia of the Canadian Airborne Regiment that an entire book is devoted to them (Grimshaw 1981). An important symbol of CAR was the Airborne coin which each member received when they joined the Regiment.

*Each soldier at the end of the Airborne Indoctrination Course would receive the coin as a special gift. For the remainder of his life, he is subject to being challenged — "coined" — by anyone else who has passed the Airborne Indoctrination Course. If he does not immediately display the coin, which he should be proudly carrying at all times, then he is obligated to buy a round of drinks for all the Airborne guys who are there. Of course, the challenger had better be sure that he has his coin in HIS pocket.*

Every member carries his coin with him at all times — still. All of my interviewees still had their coin with them. Some of them wore their Airborne cap badge - a unique blend of symbols: the parachute, wings and maple leaves - hidden inside their new headgear. Many had a little card with the words from the song, "The Longest Day" in French and English. This song was CAR's regimental march.

*"The Longest Day" song never came in until the mid eighties. For awhile they had the song "Canada," but nobody liked that so they changed it. With the camming, it seemed to me that they were trying to copy the American forces. The American forces do a lot of psyching their troops up. The British forces don't do that, and we didn't used to, but now we're doing so much work with the Americans, that we are starting now to act like them. I was dead against camming up or writing little names on their heads, like FNG. They all started shaving their heads. They're all acting like Americans now and I totally disapprove.*

*There's a song, too, that everyone knows, "The Longest Day," in English and French. You have to learn it on the Airborne Indoctrination Course, and it would last the whole week. It was something of a joke. We'd have to learn it, though we were working at the same time. It was a challenge. Like if we didn't know the words, then they would make us do push-ups, but it was still fun. We'd sit in a circle and sing. We must have looked pretty stupid. It lasted the week, and after that, we hardly ever heard about it.*

*Many men came here as soldiers,  
Many men will pass this way,  
Many men will count the hours as they live the longest day.  
Many men are tired and weary,  
Many men are here to stay,  
Many men won't see the sunset when it ends the longest day.*

*The longest day, the longest day,*

*This will be the longest day,  
Filled with hopes and filled with fears,  
Filled with blood and sweat and tears.  
Many men the mighty thousands,  
Many men to victory,  
Marching on right into battle,  
In the longest day in history.*

*You see, I practically know it by heart. It's been years since I last sang it.*

Without distinctive insignia the initiate cannot reveal his newly won status. And of course there were the unofficial popular symbols such as the famous Airborne flash — Bellerophone — the first Airborne warrior, astride the winged horse from Greek mythology — Pegasus.

*Airborne is symbolic. The legionnaires were very proud of their eagles which were the symbol of an individual regiment. They really want to be the cream of the crop. They really want to be the best soldier there is. Join the praetorian guard. They are the cream of the cream. Only the best people ever make it. Special Service in Britain does it. The Green Berets do it. The Rangers do it. Every modern forces, you know Germany did it. They probably perfected it in the modern age. If you get people believing so hard in a symbol, that they are invincible, you may just get that performance out*

*of them when you need it. So it's not something new to soldiers. Is that a good thing? Sure it is. Because it does make that group tough.*

"The paratrooper's wings are among the [soldier's] most prized possessions" (Lopez-Reyes 1971: 187). Airborne wore wings with a white maple leaf in the centre whereas those who simply complete the parachute course wear wings with a red maple leaf. So proud are the troopers of their emblems, that some have wings tattooed on their bodies in a very visible place like the back of their hand. At the heart of the tattoo would be the number of the commando unit.

*I noticed tattoos like barbed wire on the biceps like a band, Celtic text, skulls and spider webs. One guy had little figures, which were about three inches high, four inches high, all around his arm right on the biceps area. And they were I think like gnomes, you know characters from Dungeons and Dragons. A lot of the guys also had their blood group tattooed on their inner arm. Some would have little blood drops. Some had unit crests like I Commando unit, Airborne theme things, or just the Airborne crest — the parachute and the wings. There were also Canadian flags, a lot of Canadian flags, and of course Quebec flags. That's very popular in the military. Also Canadian maple leaves or flags, that is very, very popular. There were native symbols, like the dream catcher, and your run of the mill naked ladies. Guys had tattoos all over their body, chest, back, even legs, some guys had them on their legs. Tattoos were very much part of the culture.*

According to one soldier, *tattoos sort of reinforces your belonging.* Thus, tattooing was an important rite for non-commissioned members (NCMs) which further differentiated them from officers who rarely wore tattoos. In this way they are reminiscent of tribal tattoos, obtained due to membership in a certain cultural group or tribe and which have significant meaning in terms of rank within the social group. Tattooing is a painful experience and it too was a rite of passage. Men would get drunk and go with their buddies to get their tattoos.

*I got my commando tattoo about a year or so after I got there. A lot of us went and got it. There was few of us there the night I got mine. Different times you'd see it on somebody else and say "oh yeah I'm going to go get one."*

*Tattooing your commando unit on your hand started in the 1980s. As troops came in they would be encouraged to get one. They had another*



*one on the shoulder, too. They'd say "Come on let's go down and get your tattoo." It was the in thing to do.*

*Airborne had tons of tattoos. It's sort of like a rite of passage. Just in the Petawawa area I think there's two tattoo shops, a lot of homemade tattoos as well. A lot of them had the Airborne symbol, either the Pegasus or the sword. I never saw any racial tattoos. A lot of people do blood types. I saw a lot of guys with the wings tattooed on their chest and sometimes they put their blood type there or on their arm. Some had Xs and stuff on their knuckles. Those are home made tattoos people make when they're drunk. What they do when they're drunk is sort of a separate situation. They are hard partiers. They drink hard, they fight hard. Until this incident no one ever gave that much thought. That was the way they were. Definitely hard drinkers.*

There were also more sinister meanings to some tattoos. Trooper Grant testified to the Board of Inquiry that "a lot of guys that I met who are ex-2 commando, had the webs on the elbow, and the screwdrivers on the forearm and that's if you're not aware are like white supremacist type tattoos" (Testimony of Pte Grant BOI Vol. IV: 884). Tattoos can also be reflective of some form of bravado such as having your blood type tattooed on your arm so that in case you lose your dog tags and are unconscious, bleeding and/or wounded the medical personnel would be able to administer a transfusion quickly.<sup>5</sup>

The colour maroon was also an Airborne symbol, and it was reflected in the dress: maroon berets, maroon T-shirts, maroon sweat shirts. At the final closing ceremony for the Airborne, interviewees described the sea of maroon — all members of the Airborne family (military, wives, children and supporters). This has been a tradition since April 1942 when the British parachute regiment formed when the beret was chosen as distinctive headgear with maroon chosen as the colour (Ferguson 1984: 8).

*The maroon beret is a very big deal. When you get to the Airborne, it's like brain washing, because after that, you spit on the green berets. You're maroon.*

*The maroon beret's the elite, high class. It beats the green berets. The maroons have got it all, everything.*

*Just waking up in the morning you know everyone else is wearing green and you're putting on that maroon beret with that Airborne cap badge. You feel*

*better about yourself and you know you're Airborne. You know you're in better shape. You also work with better people — our soldiers are better trained. And everybody hates you — and that made me feel better too. It's like us against the world.*

*Quite simply you feel immensely proud when you wear the maroon beret. You have joined a special group of men who have taken their commitment to serve to a new level. Like your wings, the maroon beret is a signature of courage. As an officer, I feel especially proud of this beret as I know that I have separated myself from the majority of other officers in the combat arms. I have accepted the leadership challenge in an environment that has pushed that challenge to its ultimate by peacetime standards.*

In addition 1 Commando had its own totem/symbol — the wolverine.<sup>6</sup> They would hold exercises like “carcajou agressif” and “nouveau carcajou” which in 1991 in Farnham, Quebec aimed to develop team spirit at the platoon level and to help integrate the new recruits. The exercise consisted of arms competition and physical training.

*The wolverine is ferocious and aggressive and it's one of the most respected animals on earth. They can make a bear back off. They're very combative, ferocious and aggressive, like us. We had to be, the only Francophone commando against two Anglophone ones. We had to try that much harder, had to be that much more aggressive.*

The wolverine was printed on commando T-shirts, jackets, mugs and decals just as was 2 Commando's symbols — the black devil, the Zulu warrior and the rebel flag.

The other symbol we also have is the Zulu Warrior because they are good runners. They traditionally represent good runners and that's another symbol that we use also, the Black Devils.... It's a two with a spiked dagger down through it and then a picture of a devil, kind of an outline of a devil behind it and I have seen also running devils carrying shields and spears and so forth like that (Testimony of Pte Hodgson BOI Vol. IV: 1097).

The black devil symbol was a reminder of the paratroopers “original unofficial name of the Red Devils.” The name was a nickname given to paratroopers by the Germans and it was accepted as an official designation in 1943 (Norton 1971: 24). 2 Commando took the devil symbol, turned it

# AIRBORNE



# 2 COMMANDO

The black devil: symbol of 2 Commando

black and combined it with a two and a dagger. Another strong symbol was the infamous rebel flag, first used by the Confederate army during the American Civil War. Sometime in the early 1980s, 2 Commando adopted the flag as a unit banner. It might have been presented to the unit after joint exercises with U.S. troops, or perhaps it was reminiscent of the PPCLI hockey team called the Rebels (See Bercuson 1996: 211).

*People have different theories on where the rebel flag came from. The second battalion in Europe had a hockey team called the Rebels. They had a rebel flag on their shirt. They had a very good hockey team and won the Canadian Forces championship. Everybody had a rebel flag waving it at the games. One third of our soldiers came from the Second Battalion, and maybe they just brought their rebel flags with them. That's one theory. Another theory is that our boys who had been training in the Airborne units in Fort Bragg and Fort Manning brought back the flag. Many of them are southern boys from Georgia and their flag is the rebel flag. I think it's Georgia, or is it Alabama. It's one of them states. Our troops see this and they're all chewing tobacco, and our troops pick that up right away. Hey, that looks pretty cool I'm going to do that. They're waving this rebel flag, or they have a rebel flag on their back. That's another theory on how the rebel flag got infiltrated into the Airborne, through working with the American troops from the South. I know that's where the tobacco and other behaviour come from. There's an image there, and I'm sure that's where we pick that stuff up. The more we're with the Americans the more we come up with their slang, expressions and the way they dress.*

The Confederate flag and rebel name quickly became popular, and the flag was waved at athletic competitions until leadership came to think of it as a defiance of authority. It was then banned from public but not private display so soldiers could still hang it in their private quarters as they did in their tent in Somalia.

*They were called rebel commando because whenever something went wrong, they were the first unit they used to go to find out what happened.*

*We took the rebel flag off the Confederate army who fought battles and won them even when they were totally outnumbered. You see the flag up that means you have to give a little more. And that's what the flag meant.... [Some] officers who didn't understand what it meant, would naturally assume racism and that flag didn't mean racism at all. And they never*



*understood what it meant anyway. So they tried to stop us, they tried to disband it or to get rid of it. And whenever they tried to do that we'd fight harder to keep it. Cause all of a sudden it's become a pride thing. But the flag meant to give it all you got.*

*People make way too much of the rebel flag. Half the base at Petawawa has a rebel flag in their bedroom. It has nothing really to do with anything. It was something the press could take a picture of.*

Q -MGen de Faye: ...what does the rebel flag mean to you?

A- Cpl Sprenger: It just means being a rebel, sir. I have one hanging in my room.

Q- MGen de Faye: Rebel, what's a rebel?

A- Cpl Sprenger: Just being aggressive, being the best. People rally round that flag. It all has to do with camaraderie. (Testimony of Cpl Sprenger BOI Vol. V: 1183).

“Once established, organizational cultures often perpetuate themselves in a number of ways. Potential group members may be screened according to how well their values and behaviour fit in. Newly selected members may be explicitly taught the group's style. Historical stories or legends may be told again and again to remind everyone of the group's values and what they mean” (Kotter and Heskett 1992: 7). The CAR shared in the heroic tales of paratroopers from around the world in addition to having their own traditions dating back to World War II (see Ferguson 1984 for details), their motto being: “In attack most daring, in defence most cunning, in endurance most steadfast, they performed a feat of arms which will be remembered and recounted as long as the virtues of courage and resolution have power to move the hearts of men.” Airborne history was enshrined in the museum in CFB Petawawa which opened in July 1982 to preserve the glorious legends and myths of the group.

Any past war seems to be psychological preparation for the next one as the heroism and sacrifice shown in the previous war is glorified and approved. This is achieved by the way history is taught, by the procession or celebrations of peace war anniversaries, by the building of monuments and war memorials, and by the giving and proudly wearing of medals and decorations. In this way a sense of duty is established to the past to those who fought in previous wars, to country, tradition, heritage, etc. (Lewis 1985: 20, 46). Many members of the Airborne were fascinated with Vietnam.

*When they start, the young guys rent a lot of Vietnam war videos. They identify with it, get right into it with the music and all. We're trained for battle, but we don't always go to battle. It's as though all your life was dedicated to preparing for something that never happened. It creates a desire inside you.*

*Vietnam's a reference for us. Same kind of weapons. Same potential. Everything's similar, so it becomes a point of reference.*

*The music reminds us of that time. We buy the American raincoat, we've got the American jungle boots, just like in Vietnam. The helmet we've got, the helmet of the Canadian army, is the same American helmet used in Vietnam.*

Of course the special equipment of the Airborne is parachutes and all things related to parachute drops. This equipment and the history of its evolution from the first parachutes is proudly displayed in the museum at Petawawa. Moreover, CAR members were proud of being independent of technology. They did not have to "depend" on heavy weapons such as big artillery and tanks. They prided themselves in their inner strength, self-reliance and resourcefulness in the absence of the crutch of technology.

*Being allowed to ride into battle in the comfort and safety of armoured vehicles would make paras [paratroopers] soft. The equipment paratroopers have is what you have on your back, simple, no privilege. No APCs [armoured personnel carriers] here only LPCs — leather personnel carriers — boots!*

*You have to understand that the Canadian Airborne Regiment was a non-mechanized unit, therefore all the men had to walk. In a regular infantry unit the troops have vehicles to transport them. Yes, regular infantry units will do some training without vehicles but, in my opinion, the Airborne soldier was pushed more in his training, it was more demanding than for the soldier from the regular infantry unit.*

*Our training is more serious, more like the real thing. Once our parachutist lands he's like the others, but he's got more dangerous missions and he has to walk — miles and miles — with lots of stock on his back, whereas others would drive.*

## SELF-SELECTION

Different than other national forces, members of the CAR rotated in and out of the Regiment from three parent regiments: the PPCLI, The RCRs and the R22eR. "Essentially, they come from the three infantry regiments, they serve for three years, normally, and they return to their parent Regiment" (BGen Beno, BOI Vol. II: 256). According to Cohen (1978: 33), one of the most compelling reasons for not having a separate group of paratroopers such as the 82nd Airborne was that the rotation permitted the parent units to benefit from the training and spirit when the paratroopers returned.

I am suggesting that it is healthy to rotate back and forth from mechanized infantry units to the Airborne Regiment and keep a good flow back and forth; and I would suggest that it is good for any unit to not keep any groups of individuals too long in certain types of jobs or certain sub-units. I think it's much healthier to spread the wealth around both ways and pass on the experiences that they've learned in the Airborne Regiment back into their parent battalions and likewise bring back another flavour (BGen Beno, BOI Vol. II: 269).

Airborne soldiers were triple volunteers. First they volunteered for the army, then they volunteered for parachute training, then they volunteered for the Airborne.

*What you find at the Airborne regiment is a lot of very young guys. There is the attraction of jumping out of airplanes and parachuting behind enemy lines and all that. It seems a lot more challenging than the regular infantry, which just plods ahead one inch at a time. So it attracts young, very fit, unattached men, which gives the regiment a different flavour than the other regiments.*

*People would choose the Airborne because it required specialized training, like the jump course, which is physically demanding. You had to be more physically fit than in any other physical fitness program that was demanded of people in the military. The tougher you are, or the stronger you are, the more the Airborne suited your fancy.*

People self-selected for the Airborne. Once a soldier had completed his basic army training and been posted to a regiment, he could apply to take a parachute training course. On successful completion of the jump course, the soldier again returns to his home regiment and is eligible to apply for the Airborne.

Basically there is no real formal training - correction, indoctrination that occurs at this time. Any soldier within the various classifications who can serve in the Airborne Regiment, who has passed the basic parachutist course and volunteered to serve in a parachute position within the SSF, Special Service Force, could be posted to the Airborne Regiment. Postings are handled by the career managers from the other formations and units of the Canadian Armed Forces during the annual posting cycle, and wherever possible, personnel who have already had a para qualification and have expressed a desire to serve with the Airborne Regiment are usually given priority (Testimony of Capt Wilson, BOI Vol. II: 281).

Not everyone who has taken a parachute course decides to go to the Airborne. For an officer deciding to follow a traditional career path, the decision to go to the Airborne needs to be carefully considered as it might interfere with his career advancement in his parent regiment — an occupational consideration. Regiments are the basic organizational elements of the land force, and provide the institutional network for the career employment of the individual combat soldier. Although every soldier is an integral member of the CF, his horizon is largely circumscribed by activities occurring at the level of his regiment. To spend several years in the Airborne, away from the parent regiment, was not necessarily a wise career move for an individual. Col Joly testified before the Board of Inquiry that the CAR was not getting the best officers from the parent regiments. “We had manned the Regiment with second and third string majors, and the third string ones clearly had no potential” (Testimony of Col Joly BOI Vol. V: 1320).

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the regimental system was such that the Airborne could end up with a lower quality applicant simply because the parent regiment took precedence and was unable to provide quality personnel.

*Service in the Airborne is voluntary, so in one year you have a lot of good people in one regiment who want to go to the Airborne. You've got a lot to pick from. Another year, you may have all your best people not interested in going to the Airborne, but staying with their parent regiment, in more of the mainstream. This causes perhaps, for the Airborne, a lack of organization, in that being fed by the three regiments and not having its own independent structure it is at the mercy of what is more important to these regiments.*

In these cases, selection criteria would have to be ignored. In a letter to the Chief of Defence Staff, LGen Belzile wrote:



When parent regiments are fully manned with strong performers it is not difficult to find the required number of high quality volunteers for the Cdn AB Regt. But the operational requirement to maintain the AB Regt. at a 90 per cent manning level does lead periodically to a rather lenient application of the selection standards, if the parent regiments are deficient in either numbers or quality candidates. To insist upon rigid selection criteria that are applicable in all cases could, on occasion, leave us unable to man the AB Regt. without ignoring some of the selection criteria (LGen Belzile to the CDS, November 25, 1995, Document book 1, tab 3, p. A-1, para 5.).

Cockerham (1973: 215, 224) found that action-oriented individuals self-select for the Airborne. The Airborne attracts individuals who identify as combat types.

There is such a thing as a "natural soldier"; the kind who derives his greatest satisfaction from male companionship, from excitement, and from the conquering of physical and psychological obstacles. He doesn't necessarily want to kill people as such, but he will have no objections if it occurs within a moral framework that gives him justification - like war - and if it is the price of gaining admission to the kind of environment he craves. Whether such men are born or made, I do not know, but most of them end up in armies....But armies are not full of such men. They are so rare that they form only a modest fraction even of small professional armies, mostly congregating in the commando-type special forces (Dyer 1985: 117, 118).

*As a young infantry platoon commander in the 1970s, I was offered the opportunity to take the parachute course and on successful completion, move on to the Airborne Regiment. I accepted the challenge keenly as the Regiment, in my view, represented the epitome of warrior soldiering. I know that it was one step beyond what I had been exposed to in a line infantry battalion and thus would represent the ultimate physical and mental challenge for me.*

*All human beings have different levels of interest and different levels of anxiety and levels of combativeness. For people that are attracted to the Airborne, those feelings are that much stronger. You can see it in their eyes. They like fighting. They look for women. They hate losing. They absolutely hate anything that reflects negatively on themselves as soldiers within the family of the Airborne, or anything that reflects negatively on the Airborne. They're fiercely wild about each other, because in battle*

*buddies will risk life and limb to remove them from harm, from dying or being captured. So it's not altogether unnatural. These things are encouraged.*

Similarly Segal et al. (1984: 489) noted that "Airborne troopers are self-selected and stress such values as courage and excitement, they are oriented toward combat and action. These individuals are then socialized to the values of a "parachutist's creed" that includes a commitment to fight on to the objective and never surrender." Cockerham's study (1973: 225) of Airborne showed that "[o]ne-half of airborne respondents stated their primary motivation for volunteering for airborne training was their desire to meet a personal physical and psychological challenge. "Another 23 percent volunteered for the excitement and another 23 percent identified with an elite military unit."

The Hewson Report (1985: 24) on the Airborne in Petawawa noted: "Although the Cdn AB Regt is simply a battalion-sized infantry capable of being inserted by parachute, soldiers on the outside perceive it as being an elite unit. Indeed, most of the members of the regiment perceive themselves as being part of an elite unit." Our interviewees confirmed this time and time again.

*The Airborne were definitely an elite. Whether or not it's a good thing is debatable, but they were the elite of the Canadian army.*

*The Airborne is an elite compared to the other infantry units.*

*It was the Airborne's passion to be in the top, most elite regiment in Canada. They all belong to their own regiments which they were all very proud of but when they come to the Airborne they shelve it and go back to their regiment later. They're Airborne. A lot of them want to stay in the Airborne with their Airborne family. I know of one guy, he's been 24 years in the Airborne. The pride, you could just feel it.*

A- MCpl Godin: In my opinion, sir, I always thought of the Regiment to be the elite, the *crème de la crème*, so to speak...

Q- MGen de Faye: So you saw them as an elite unit?

A- MCpl Godin: Well yes, sir. That's what everybody always perceived the Regiment to be, as far as I know, sir (Testimony of MCpl Godin BOI Vol. III: 707).

Many men loved the experience so much that they kept coming back to the Airborne or tried to stay in as long as possible.

*I did two tours in the Airborne. It's something I aspired to for a long time; the pinnacle of my trade, if you will, as an infantryman, infantry officer to serve with the Airborne.*

*My first encounter with the Airborne regiment was so positive that I knew I wanted to have another chance to feel that environment again.*

*You get very loyal. The loyalty to the Regiment makes you want to stay. I guess that's why I stayed so long.*

*Some men didn't want to go back to their units after being in the Airborne. Their heads kind of swelled up, and they felt that they were elite, that they were too good to go back to their other unit. I guess some of them couldn't realize that they actually weren't all that much better than everybody else. But some of them did go back and serve.*

*I often wonder what drew people into the Airborne, since they didn't get a lot of chance to move around. You just basically came to Petawawa and you stayed here. It might have been the American and British affiliations with the Airborne and that type of collegial atmosphere, but I truly got the impression that this was the end of the infantry line, especially for young soldiers. People would come back to the Airborne. They'd come, do a tour, come back and start again. I got the impression it was the uniqueness of the organization and the toughness that they wanted to display that brought them here. And they made no bones about feeling that they were a cut above everybody else and letting you know it.*

*Ever since I was little — mostly watching movies and stuff like that, I saw guys jumping out of airplanes. Then when I joined the militia everybody was talking about how good the Airborne were. They were different. You had to earn your place to get there. If you didn't pass the PT [physical training] test in whatever amount of time that was given they sluff you off someplace else or post you right back out. Just to prove that I could do it. I worked hard to get there. Once I got there I didn't want to leave.*

With men like this who are already self-selected, secondary socialization does not significantly affect a value change since the men applying to the unit

already have the values. Rather, socialization reinforces pre-existing values: "Airborne training did not produce a dramatic change in attitudes and values among the Airborne respondents, but served instead to enhance pre-existing attitudes and values which guided their selection of a desired military role" (Cockerham 1973: 227). Neither does age, rank nor length of service play an important part in attitude formation: "[i]t does *not* require years and years of service for first term enlisted men to develop the strongly promilitary attitudes found among later-termers. For those who planned to reenlist, the promilitary attitudes were evident as early as the first year of service" (Bachman and Blair 1976: 103). Similarly, Lang's study (1972: 42) of Dutch naval college cadets concludes that their commitment to the navy was "in large measure a function of background and attitudes at time of entry." After reviewing the literature on the subject, Kourvetaris and Dobratz (1977: 14) and Segal and Segal (1993: 67) confirm that self-selection is seen as more important in shaping military values and attitudes than socialization.

Studies of other types of organizations conclude that applicants who match the group profile will be more easily accepted by the group and will have an easier time adjusting. Cleveland (1991) examined the person/organization fit and found that the more applicants to a group (college sororities in this case) matched the stereotypes of that group, the more likely it was that applicants would be accepted for membership. Chatman's study (1991: 459) of business organizations found that "recruits whose values, when they enter, match those of the firm adjust to it more quickly; second, those who experience the most vigorous socialization, fit the firm's values better than those who do not; and third, recruits whose values most closely match the firm's feel most satisfied, and intend to, and actually remain with it longer."

According to Cockerham (1973: 225), Airborne respondents prior to training already "revealed themselves as having followed an active and aggressive pattern of behavior since childhood. The effect of airborne training upon their self-concept was to enhance their already established self image of personal potency and to reduce any anxiety about not being able to measure up to the paratrooper image."

*We didn't see it as suffering when we were there, it was hard, but that's one thing about the Airborne. Tough. Proud to have gone to the most extreme conditions Canadian troops had seen since World War II. And that was said to us many times. And that's finally enough, as a source of pride for the people there. Yeah, we did it in the toughest conditions ever.*



One of the consequences of self-selection to the Airborne then, was to bring together a group who had much in common with each other and who felt they were different from other groups. Cockerham (1973: 220) tells us that parachute units serve first as a means of selection for action-oriented individuals (non-action types can be identified and distributed into non-combat positions) and second as a means of role-specific socialization for action-oriented individuals into units where such behaviour types are desired. Action-oriented individuals such as Airborne members are unlikely to espouse occupational values. This seems to be true of other paratroop units.

An American studying the Israeli paratroop corps said that those units project "the heroic image of the military leader rather than the military manager." The French paratroops were called the "knights of guerrilla war," who feared that they would lose status as the French military degenerated into "an army of technicians" (Cohen 1978: 36).

#### PARA MEN

As seen in the previous section, men arrive in the Airborne already predisposed to a combat mind set. Studies done by Cockerham<sup>7</sup> (1978) and Segal et al. (1984: 489) suggest that "Airborne troops [are] more willing to deploy for combat than personnel in more conventional ground manoeuvre units," more willing to volunteer for foreign combat missions and are more combative than ordinary troops. According to Canadian Gen Boyle, "There is no doubt that the Airborne are the toughest and some of the meanest soldiers. They have a tremendous fighting capability."<sup>8</sup>

"In airborne training, the trainees acquire not only knowledge about military parachuting but also those shared norms, values, sentiments, attitudes, and social traditions of the airborne soldier which are intended to develop a compatible community of like-mindedness and purpose" (Cockerham 1973: 215). This refers not to the jump course taken to qualify for the Airborne or even the Airborne Indoctrination Course, but rather to the total experience, the constant training and reinforcement of values. Willes (1981: 207) states that the tensions involved in the ongoing training for jumping ensure that there is no regression from the personality change which took place during the initial socialization — the fixing of identity as discussed in Chapter 3. McCollum (1976: 17) says that the "Airborne mystique" is, in fact, a personality change undergone by paratroopers while

Aran (1974: 126) describes certain "motifs" which maintain the personality change which we may call "the Airborne mystique." The first motif is the rich symbolic significance with which parachuting is charged. This motif obviously results from the intense emotions that accompany the act, especially fear. The fear is always there, but it is under control.

Personal identification with the Airborne is important because it increases one's concept of personal potency in the face of danger. The element of danger and mastery of anxiety, in turn, add to the image of superiority. Whenever an individual jumps from an aircraft he assumes a risk that his parachute may not open. The estimate of malfunction is very low, yet risk is a factor that is always present.... The danger of military parachuting tends to draw Airborne soldiers together on the basis of shared experience (Cockerham 1973: 224).

Several of my interviewees talked of injuries they experienced during jumping. Military jumping is not as comfortable as sport jumping. In fact the danger is what makes the Airborne special, braver and better than other infantry units.

*Being Airborne meant that one had accepted a challenge not evident in most peacetime soldiering. That challenge was one of coming to grips with fear and conquering it in a disciplined manner. Additionally, by serving in the Airborne one could say that he had joined an organization that took basic soldiering to a new level. The majority of those who serve in the Canadian army could not measure up to the demands of Airborne soldiering. It is too tough physically and it offers constant mental stress. For most, standing in the door of a C-130 with 100 lbs of equipment strapped to you, ready to leap out into a cold night onto a strange drop zone, is not something to commit oneself to.*

*They would give me the impression that I was not part of their group. Even though I had many friends that were Airborne officers, they had a certain bonding or camaraderie that you cannot share. For example, when they talk about thrill of jumping. You got nothing to share with them. I haven't gone through the jump course. So I'm not part of them.*

*When you're jumping out an aircraft you never know what can happen. It hits you in the guts. Even after a thousand jumps. Because of your parachute. You don't fold your parachute. Somebody else folds your parachute for you. And we all know what happened a couple of times in the United States. The guys*

*who didn't like someone cut his wires. Cut the lines and the guy died. Ya. They killed lots of people like that. And you know, Airborne is kind of like a tree in life. Because when you are jumping off a aircraft every time is the first time. And you never know what's going to happen. You don't know how you are going to fall. You know how to fall but you don't know where you are going to land with the wind. And if you jump during bad weather conditions, you can be pushed by the wind into the forest and you can break your leg. You can kill yourself if you hit the trees too hard.*

The Airborne also lost members due to jumping accidents in 1984 and 1990 but the biggest loss was in 1989 during exercise Brim Frost in Alaska when the crash of a C-130 Hercules aircraft killed five members of the regiment and seriously injured several others.

Jumping out of an airplane is scary but the camaraderie and group bonding work to push the man out of the airplane. The “jumper draws his strength from his identification with the group” (Cockerham 1973: 224). Similarly Kellet (1982: xvii) notes:

Occupations that confront danger, stress, or hardship also tend to display such adaptive responses as the acceptance of certain values and attitudes, a strong peer group influence, an “in-group” orientation, and a considerable degree of regulation. These mechanisms help the members of such groups manage their anxieties.

Testifying to the Board of Inquiry, CWO Raymond described the sense of bonding felt by the Canadian Airborne.

What makes a soldier with experience in the Vandoos, the Royals or the Patricia's come to the Airborne Regiment and put that all aside? It is the mystique of the maroon beret and I'm quoting Montgomery, to bring it down to our terms, these soldiers, and I'm not trying to be dramatic, challenge death by jumping out of an airplane. And that's what binds them together. They hold more loyalty, I have seen more soldiers hold more loyalty...to the maroon beret than they do to their parent regiment. And that, in fact, is because together as a group, they face death and jump out of an airplane, and it's as simple as that. Because I've gone through that, I've grown up through that (Testimony of CWO Raymond BOI Vol. IV: 1010).

Our interviews confirmed this sense of bonding in the Airborne.

*The people you work with make the Airborne a place you want to stay. They always say the military's one big happy family. It was more so in the Airborne Regiment. You knew everybody in your platoon in the commando. I'm here in my former regiment now and there's still people I don't know in the company. I don't want to know them.*

*The Airborne was a tight unit, very cohesive, a regiment with more esprit de corps and a sense of belonging than any other I've seen before. You just felt like part of the family.*

*People would go "I'm in the Airborne Regiment. We stick together even though there was a mix of people from different backgrounds, different military cultures."*

As we remarked in Chapter 3, regimental loyalty is encouraged throughout the army. However, in the Airborne, regimental loyalty could create conflict of interest.

*The Airborne and the other regiments are totally different, but you don't completely leave behind your old regiment when you become Airborne. We are identified with our regiment by our membership in a commando, and even compare the regiment with the Airborne, but it's like two different armies even though we're part of the same gang. We don't totally leave behind our old unit. We adapt to Airborne, then we become Airborne, but we don't leave it behind.*

Kyle Brown described how parental regimental loyalties gave way to Airborne regimental loyalty, particularly commando loyalty. "Almost everyone who was posted to 2 Commando from the PPCLI immediately and completely severed emotions of loyalty to the home regiment and gave absolute loyalty to 2 Commando - all the while dreading the day when they'd eventually be posted back to the PPCLI (Worthington and Brown 1997: 118).

Some soldiers stated that, if there was a fight between members of their Airborne unit and members of their parent regiment, it would be a tough decision but, in the end they would go to the aid of fellow Airborne, even if they were from other commandos, and fight against members of their parent regiment.



*2 Commando was proud of being part of 2 Commando. 3 Commando is always proud of being 3 Commando again 1 Commando is always proud of being 1 Commando. We always call them commando, never platoon. If I saw a fight between 1 Commando and the PPCLI people, and I was PPCLI at the time, I'd just turn around and walk away 'cause that's acceptable to do if you're PPCLI. If I was a member of the Airborne Regiment at the time, I couldn't turn around and walk away. I mean they're attacking the Regiment, I'd fight with 1 Commando. It depends on what unit I'm serving at the time.*

The reason given for this was that, in the Airborne, you learn to depend on the fellow behind you who is checking your parachute — and he could be from another commando unit — so your loyalties were to the Airborne first and foremost. For example, Trooper Hodgson (BOI: 1096) testified at the Board of Inquiry that the CAR members were hostile to any non-CAR member whomever that person might be. Among men who are bonded together so intensely, there is a powerful process of peer pressure in which the individual cares so deeply about his comrades and what they think about him that he would rather die than let them down (Grossman 1995: 150).

Aran (1974:124) believes that parachuting is bipolar in that it involves extremely intense psychological and social states of an opposite nature. During the pre-jump phase the dominant factor is group control. Next, comes the jump with an extreme state of individualism during descent, which in turn is followed by post-jump return to group control as the paratrooper begins his ground mission. The intensity of both the group and individual experience, along with the potential danger, functions to strengthen group solidarity.

In jump school any number of people were scared shitless, but they jumped - because they were told over and over that everybody was just as scared, but a "man" jumps anyway. The idea being that if they followed their instincts and didn't jump, they just weren't men. So they jumped - because the thought of quitting and losing their manhood was worse than the thought of being splattered over the drop zone...clearly the possession of the characteristics that qualify one for membership in the fraternity of men (in this instance airborne wings) are dearer than life. As the jump school graduate concludes, "the fear that makes us go back again and again is stronger than our fear of dying or death: it's the fear of losing our manhood" (Lewis 1985: 35-36).



Airborne soldier on patrol

As the above quote highlights, a factor which plays a part in motivation is found in the notions of masculinity. In the Airborne, "status is derived from the role of combat soldier (proof of manhood) in the extreme case of war (test of manhood)" (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978: 156). According to Cockerham (1973: 219) "the prototype of the paratrooper is the aggressive, masterful man of action." The word "aggressive" was often used in relation to the Airborne (particularly 2 Commando) by my interviewees.

*To describe the Airborne in one word, it would be aggressive. Their role is an aggressive role. Their role in a war is to parachute behind enemy lines and prepare for our troops: blow up bridges, plunder and pillage.*

*The Airborne had a reputation for physical toughness and for being aggressive, more than any other unit in the Canadian Forces. They also had an unparalleled reputation for being undisciplined.*

*The Airborne set themselves apart by their aggressive behaviour. For example, when there was a military policeman noticing a drunk driver driving ahead of him. More often than not it might lead to a chase. Or if he was pulled over there might be a confrontation, instead of a simple arrest. They are more aggressive that way. Same thing in their dealing with support people. For example, in the base hospital some might demand treatment right away as they are Airborne and some others might not accept treatment as they would think it's bullshit.*

*There aren't supposed to be differences between the commandos, except for language, but I think that 2 Commando was more aggressive, more wild.*

*2 Commando was a more aggressive commando, the type you'd want to send in if there's a dirty job to do. They're the type of guys that I believe had the personality of commandos.*

*I felt that members of 2 Commando were very gung-ho. Basically saying: "I can't wait to kill my first Black!" Some of them were trigger happy and too aggressive. I talked to the CO after an O [Orders] group about it and I remember him saying: "Well, that's the way I like it!" The two other commandos weren't that aggressive.*

Moskos (1970: 154) makes a very interesting observation regarding masculinity and combat: "an exaggerated masculine ethic is much less

evident among soldiers after their units have been bloodied." This is a possible explanation for exaggerated Airborne bravado who had not been "bloodied" by the test of combat. But my interviewees were also quick to point out that parachuting was the closest thing to testing a man and if you could trust a man to jump you could trust him in battle.

Parachute jumping tests and hardens a soldier under stress in a way nothing short of battle can do. You never know about others. But paratroopers will fight. You can bet on that. They repeatedly face danger while jumping and develop self-discipline that conquers fear. Subconsciously, every trooper knows this. That's why he has that extra cocky confidence. (Maj J.K. McCollum U.S. Army, 1976 quoted in Willes 1981: 207).

The great majority of Airborne values are related to fighter spirit marked by aggressive enthusiasm. Other values include brotherhood, emphasis on dress and bearing, honour and a special reverence for traditions (Cockerham 1973: 221, 1978: 4). These are core elements of military ethos.

Jumping encourages self-confidence, determination, self-reliance, masterful activity, aggression, courage, and other items symptomatic of the Phallic-narcissistic type, all of which are important in the military setting, especially in paratroop commando units, which rely heavily on individual action and are aggressive in nature. In a way, even the illusion of omnipotence enhanced by jumping can make a better soldier (Maj J.K. McCollum U.S. Army, 1976 quoted in Willes 1981: 207).

Airborne do not just jump out of airplanes. I was told that the real paratrooper's job begins when he lands and that's what really makes him different. A paratrooper lands ready to fight and all he has with him is what he can carry on his back.

*The Airborne's different mainly because of the emphasis on the psychological aspect of their work. Take the xxx, it's a very good unit, but they focus on medium intensity warfare on big operations in Europe and they're mechanized. But the Commando works on small, less conventional operations. And they're not mechanized or motorized. You just have to get by with what you've got on you. It's physical.*

An inherent limitation of an airborne force is the restricted number of integral heavy support weapons. As such, the Canadian Airborne Regiment, perhaps



more than any other conventional or light infantry unit, realizes the vital importance of basic field soldiering (The Maroon Beret 1987: 30).

The emphasis on physical training is crucial since a paratrooper may have to walk for hours before he rejoins his group. There is no place for the disabled/physically challenged in the Airborne. (In fact, few of my interviewees even wore glasses). This is also why there is more individuality among paratroopers. A commanding officer can be hurt landing and the lower ranking soldier must make decisions because he might be all alone out there. Soldiers were therefore encouraged to exercise leadership in the lower ranks, which is not the case in other infantry units.

*The Airborne Indoctrination Course was hard. A lot of long hours. You were pushed to the maximum. There it didn't matter what rank you were. If you were a sergeant or a private you could end up leading the platoon...so you were pushed.*

*A corporal in the rifle company does not have too much authority but a corporal in the Airborne Regiment has a lot more responsibility bestowed on him.*

The Airborne trained constantly in all sorts of physical environments from extreme heat to arctic cold, with live ammo, in night jumps and water jumps, in order to simulate environments as close to real combat missions as possible. They were always preparing, always training in order to develop physical and mental toughness. What is important in this training for war is that it was against a clearly defined enemy represented as “the other side,” identified by a different uniform and pitched against the Airborne with strength. My interviewees were very clear in telling me how they trained.

*I'd rather have a tougher, more intense training, because I know very well that Airborne forces don't have a chance to survive very long in a demanding context. In a United Nations mission or in a deployment without opposition, our forces will survive as long as they have logistical support and supplies.*

*Some of the guys who applied to the Airborne were quitters, drop-outs in civilian life. As a leader, I wanted to get them used to the idea of commitment. If you want to stick with us, it's going to be a challenge. If you don't — because some of them just said: “This fucking business is just too*

*much, I'm gettin' out" — then I respect that decision. It's true, they're not good enough for us. I'd rather have a few less guys, so we'll just have the ones who are gonna take it to the limit. Now, you might find that a bit extreme, but that's the way it is.*

*We'd go back and check up on the men during training. We couldn't leave them alone because sometimes there'd be one guy who'd take a short cut. So you know right away that this guy's a jerk, but you'll get back to him soon enough. With some guys, we'd start a little "counselling" right away, push them, so they'd understand that the physical training is really important for an elite group and if it's not their bag then they've got a decision to make: either they go back to where they came from or they push themselves and start training seriously or they're gonna regret it.*

#### ELITE OR NOT ELITE

The first known discussion of the employment of elite troops appears in Sun-Tzu's *The Art of War* (1994) written in the sixth century B.C. Since then, elite units such as Alexander's companions or Rome's praetorians have captured the imagination. Commando units as we know them are a product of modernization, specialization and the professionalization of the military (Cohen 1978: ii). According to Beaumont, (1974: 2) the "elite forces formed in the 20th Century were, naturally enough, voluntary and, with rare exceptions, had official recognition of their elite status before they were actually assembled. Usually, this meant that physical and mental standards for admission were high. They had distinctive uniforms or insignia and traditions and customs — frequently highly synthetic — which formed rapidly."

The new elite forces were relatively free from ordinary administration and discipline. Entrance to these units was often through the surviving of an ordeal, a "rite of passage," requiring tolerance of pain or danger and subsequent dedication to a hazardous role. Many corps d'élite - but not all - received much publicity from media. Moreover, they did not have to accept nonvolunteers into their company. These factors produced in many cases a disdain among members of elite units for outsiders, which meant that headquarters personnel, civilians, and adjacent allied units were often more detested than the enemy.... Across the many types of elite forces the most common traits have been voluntarism, special selection criteria and training, and distinctive clothing or insignia (Beaumont 1974: 2-3).

Elite according to Webster's dictionary (Cohen 1978: 17) means "a choice part," "socially superior." To some extent, all military feel pride in their units and are encouraged by their leaders that they are "the best of the best"; however some units are more "elite" than others.<sup>9</sup> Was the Airborne an elite unit? Some high-ranking Canadian officers certainly felt that the Airborne were not different from other infantry units:<sup>10</sup>

I will state emphatically that there is no such thing as the Airborne soldier. There are soldiers who parachute and there are soldiers who choose not to. There are many interpretations on what the Airborne soldier could be and I am not about to speculate. On the average, the values and attitudes of the Canadian Airborne Regiment soldier are little different from those found in normal combat arms units.... They are proud to be paratroopers and proud of their unit. They wear their unit jacket with civilian clothes with a commando badge on it indicating whether they are 1, 2, 3 or Service Commando. They wear Maroon T-shirts whenever they can, and they are fiercely proud of being in the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

On the average, the soldiers of the Canadian Airborne Regiment are personally more confident than other soldiers because they are more physically fit. They are taught to be more resourceful and they are frequently put in situations on their own. From time to time, one gets the impression that the immature ones are a touch "cocky," and I will say that they do refer to non-jumpers or non-jump units as "legs" or "leg units" and that's an expression which is used in the army, and it derives from the American expression of "straight leg unit" as opposed to parachute units, and that is a term which is used. Of course, after their tour, if they are staying in the army, they will go back to those, what they refer to as "leg units" and change their tune. Are they elite? No. I repeat, Are they elite? No. Do they think they are? Sometimes, yes, but it is similar to the sense of elitism one finds in *recce* [reconnaissance] platoons within the infantry battalions or *recce* squadrons within armoured regiments or the parachute battery within the artillery 2nd Regiment Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.<sup>11</sup>

The above statement to the Somalia Inquiry by BGen Beno stands in sharp contrast to information that Airborne soldiers were given on their AIC. We can see that the first commandment of the Canadian Parachute Troops is "You are the elite of the Canadian Army."<sup>12</sup>

1. You are the elite of the Canadian Army. For you action shall be fulfilment and you must train yourself to stand every test.

2. Cultivate true comradeship, for together with your comrades you will triumph or die.
3. Be shy of speech and incorruptible. The strong act, the weak chatter, chatter will bring you to the grave.
4. Calmness and caution, thoroughness and determination, valour and a relentless spirit of attack will make you superior when the test comes.
5. Face to face with the enemy, the most precious thing is ammunition. The man who fires aimlessly merely to reassure himself has no guts. He is a weakling and does not deserve the name of "Paratrooper".
6. Never surrender. Your honour lies in victory or death.
7. Only with good weapons can you achieve success. Look after them therefore, on the principle, "First my weapons, then myself".
8. You must grasp the full meaning of each operation so that, even if your leader should fall, you can carry it out coolly and warily.
9. Fight chivalrously against an honourable foe; fifth columnists<sup>13</sup> and civilian snipers deserve no quarter.
10. With your eyes open, keyed up to the highest pitch, agile as a greyhound, tough as leather, hard as steel, you will be the embodiment of a Canadian Paratrooper.

-reprinted from Canadian Army Training Memorandum Number 24  
(March 1943)

In truth, the answer to the question of elitism depends on how you examine it. If you set up objective criteria of what constitutes elite and then compare the Airborne, you might arrive at a "maybe." For example, if war is the ultimate test of manhood as Arkin and Dobrofsky (1978: 156) maintain, then the Airborne had never been put to the test. However, would one consider a special police squad sniper not a sniper until he or she has shot someone? Probably not. In fact, the true definition of elite lies in training and intention. Let us examine Cohen's (1978: 17-18) definition of elite unit.

1. A unit becomes elite when it is perpetually assigned special or unusual missions: in particular, missions that are - or seem to be - extremely hazardous. (Airborne units have long been considered elite since parachuting is a particularly dangerous way of going in to battle).
2. Elite units conduct missions which require only a few men who must meet high standards of training and physical toughness, particularly the latter. The Airborne put a particular emphasis on physical fitness (their standards were higher than the normal infantry's) and on tough-



ness in their specialty training (such as a parachute insertion to capture a nuclear power demonstrator site from mock terrorists). This they often carried out with special forces such as the Rangers and the SAS - the British Special Air Service.

3. An elite unit becomes elite only when it achieves a reputation — justified or not — for bravura and success. Again, success is how you define it. If aggressivity and hard training are success, then the Airborne qualify. If carrying out joint training with other parts of the CF or other special forces is success, then they qualify again. If winning a competition is success then the Airborne won a number of athletic competitions in addition to prestigious competitions such as the CF Small Arms Competition and the Northern European Command Infantry Competition. But if battle is success, well they never got the chance.

According to Peck (1983: 228), there are general principles regarding specialized groups: the specialized group inevitably develops a group character that is self-reinforcing. Specialized groups are therefore particularly prone to narcissism, that is, to experiencing themselves as uniquely right and superior in relation to other homogeneous groups. Adopting the approach of social constructionism<sup>14</sup> involves examining the meaning that actors themselves give to a social situation. Taking the words of the soldiers and the actions of the commandos themselves, it can be said that the Airborne members perceived themselves as special, distinct and superior combat troops. The following section will look at how the Airborne can be considered special by adopting a social constructionism perspective.

### *The Soldiers Saw Themselves as Different*

In Cockerham's study of the Airborne (1973: 225), "both officer[s] and enlisted men believed very strongly that the airborne is elite, and this attitude has been confirmed for them through experience. By comparing the functions and capabilities of others and their units, including the type of military personnel in other units, they saw themselves as the best according to their value system." Clearly, the members of CAR saw themselves as special combat soldiers.

*Airborne also have a different mentality. Oh yes, it's still the same guys who arrive from the home regiment. Our military training or culture in our respective regiments has taught us to think militarily. But there are*

*fundamental differences in the way the commandos see a situation or conceive of a solution. For the same problem, different approaches.*

*The Airborne were mostly the elite. I guess you could say we had the idea We're the best. Everyone makes us out to be the best. Even the media makes them out to be the best. Compared to say the RCR and the PPCLI you know. They certainly set a standard for PT and what not. People would look and see what these guys are doing. As a brigade, as a special service corps, all the other units should be trying to go towards us.*

*Whatever we ask you, you'll do it because you're the best. That's the type of mentality we use on our elite soldiers. We tell them they're the best. If you tell a guy he's average. Well, guess what performance you get. So the Airborne have been told that they are the best. We'll expect nothing but the best from you. If you fail yourself, you'll fail us. You will not be welcome. We do not carry any dead weight. If you want to be one of us you got to prove things. You got to go through the hazing ritual. Which is degrading and demoralizing and disgusting to get to that. So they're different. They thought they were the elite. That may have led to them thinking they were above the rules and regulations. But within the forces we have always known about the Airborne. Don't mess with the Airborne. They were in Edmonton and there's all sorts of stories when they were there. An Airborne soldier was downtown having a drink and a couple of the local boys decide they don't like this soldier in their bar and they punch him out. The next day 50 soldiers from the Airborne are in that bar. Don't mess with the Airborne we'll break your arms. That sort of attitude pervaded the Airborne.*

According to BGen Beno: "Soldiers posted into the Regiment are given very physically demanding training and are led to believe, or are at least told to believe, that they are elite troops.<sup>15</sup> Airborne saw other combat troops and non-combat personnel as inferior. They called them "legs" which I was told means "lack enough guts."

*The Airborne doesn't interact with the legs. Well, anyone who doesn't jump is called a leg and I felt they were treated poorly by the Airborne. But that's my personal opinion.*

*Reservists are weaker than regular forces, it's true. But they were rubbed in it very clearly in Somalia. I think the reservists had a tougher screening*

*before going to Somalia and then were belittled by the Airborne. The Airborne also belittled the legs, even if their rank was lower than the legs. A leg is a non-Airborne, someone that has to walk to get where they're going.*

*In the Airborne even a regular soldier, who they call legs, isn't one of them. The Airborne see their soldiering skills at a much higher level. Their endurance level. They can run a little faster, fight a little harder. They do everything a soldier does but better. They shoot straighter. They jump out of planes and they love hardship. When they first got there, they lived in a hole in the ground. When I look back I can see all the comforts they had achieved by the time I got there which was still horrible. They're asked to go and jump at night in the snow in the arctic. They look forward to it. I mean a lot of soldiers wouldn't. They would look forward to getting it over with.*

Montgomery's (1980: 970) work on reference groups found that people tend to overestimate the prestige of organizations to which they belong and with which they presumably identify: People "significantly over-estimated prestige of organizations similar to their own and significantly under-estimated the prestige of organizations different from their own."

There were also special groups within the Regiment. The Reconnaissance (Recce) Platoon and the Pathfinders enjoyed unusual prestige as being the "best of the best." Pathfinders are considered to be "special men." They wear special badges to mark this. These men are trained to parachute into an area by free fall and to set up the drop zone for incoming Airborne troops.

*Recce Platoon is the elite of the elite because they have to jump first. They arrive 24 hours in advance of the Regiment. They don't jump static line like the rest of the Regiment, they jump free fall from much higher altitudes. They do so in order to not be detected. Then they set up the drop zones for the rest of the Airborne. So they are the first to jump and often the last to leave. They are seen as the best of the best. Some members of the platoon will be Pathfinders because they will have taken the Pathfinder special course and for that reason these guys are the cream of the cream. After taking the Pathfinder course a guy will be asked if he wants to go to the Regiment or to Recce Platoon. People ask to take the Pathfinder course and only those with the best attitude are chosen.*

*In reconnaissance missions, you're trained to survive. You're at the top of the infantry. The commandos too. Actually, it's the infantry's elite. The regular infantry attacks from the front, sends the commandos by parachute to crush the enemy from behind. And before that, reconnaissance has been sent to infiltrate, to get the information. They have to be able to survive all sorts of conditions and make it back. The commandos are an elite. Out to destroy a communications centre, they're surrounded by the enemy, all alone. The Pathfinder, that's the top. They're totally alone, so they have to be better in order to survive in the wild. They have to be prepared for any enemy imaginable. They have to be more brutal, more aggressive, more competent, stronger and more powerful.*

...looking into Recce Platoon, you will find the quality of soldier being probably the higher standard from the Commandos, usually that's...it's...let's say, a more elite unit than the Commando itself and it's looked upon as being a privilege to serve with Recce Platoon. So, the calibre of soldier sent to Recce Platoon would probably be the top soldiers in the Commandos themselves (Testimony of Cpl Jones BOI: 991).

### *The Soldiers Behaved as if They Were Different*

Airborne soldiers behaved in such a manner that they were sometimes called "arrogant." They, at times, would not salute officers from other units. *Because I am Airborne I do not have to take a back seat to anybody in the army.* They behaved as if they thought they were better than other army units. They sometimes refused to respect officers from other regiments.

*They didn't seem to respect the higher ranks that weren't Airborne as much as ordinary soldiers might. An officer walking by might not be saluted by an Airborne soldier, whereas most every other private on the base would salute him. To get them to do something it was better to get their warrant officer to order, rather than a warrant officer from outside the Airborne.*

To some of my interviewees, they stood out because of their proud bearing and special clothing.

*You develop a culture and you give them a special uniform: the beret, the jump wings, the jump boots, what can be perceived as a snazzier type uniform, the camouflage smock — where no one else in Canada is allowed to*



*wear a camouflage smock. You trained them to be physically fit and to be physically tough. When you've done all that, what I've noticed is that for men, it is difficult sometimes for the high echelon to say that you have disappointed me, or "I am disappointed in your performance," because so much has been invested in this image now.*

*Certainly the people in the Airborne have a reputation in the armed forces and in their own minds of being special or different. They were issued special jump smocks which they wore in place of the standard over jacket, like a windbreaker. All the army had one but the Airborne had another that they used. It is functional but has a diaper flap that you can swing between your legs, so that when you parachute your coat doesn't balloon up. It was functional but it was in a very different kind of cloth, a very different pattern. It was easily recognizable at a distance as being an Airborne thing.*

#### *The Military Treated Them as Different*

Even though the CF constantly maintained that the Airborne were not different, they were allowed to wear a special paratrooper smock. They sported their maroon T-shirts even after the Regiment was disbanded and this was tolerated until recently. Interviewees maintained that the Airborne received special privileges such as access to special courses in the United States more easily. Official documents referred to the Canadian Airborne as elite within the CF.

#### *The Commandos Trained as if They Were Different*

*Joining the Airborne was an honour, the prestige of being part of an elite unit. It was a goal for an infantry soldier. Jumping out of a plane and doing your job, and it's not like the infantry where the basis is a repetitious cycle. With the Airborne, everything you trained for was executed in an exercise. In training, it all works up toward doing an actual reconnaissance, then it works up to a raiding party and they did an attack and after the attack they would disperse and then come around and get extracted out of the situation. Everybody had their job, we were very close knit, very tight. And the job worked better with that close knit unity. You do not see people coming in too often and hardly ever anyone going out. Therefore, you still have the unity.*

*Well you didn't have to make people be a team 'cause hardship brings people together. Especially my first year; we spent a lot of time in the field, with no sleep, going, going and you live with the guy next to ya 24 hours a day. That's what makes the team work. I had the same section for several years and only a few guys changed. So I knew them — some of those guys I worked with for three years. And I didn't have to tell them things to do or what to do next " 'cause they already knew and that's what builds the team" 'cause we work together so long through hardship, hard exercise. The harder the exercise the more you get out of it.*

From the Airborne's annual reports from 1979 to 1994, it can be seen that they trained hard physically, for example holding their own version of a training competition (marathon running with rucksacks, etc.), and trained with special units from around the world. In short they behaved as if they were in a special unit participating in joint exercises and exchanging personnel with their "elite peers." For example:

- Joint exercises — with U.S. Marine Corps at Camp LeJeune, North Carolina; with the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg; with legionnaires du 3<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Infanterie de la Légion étrangère in Guyana.
- Personnel exchange — with the SAS; with the 82nd Airborne Division; the 75th Rangers; U.S. Special Forces; French Foreign Legion; with the British Parachute Regiment.
- Special training carried out — long range patrolling tactics with the British SAS in England; air assault using U.S. 10th Special Forces Group Helicopters; jungle warfare training in French Guyana (1991); survival training in the desert at Fort Bliss Texas (1985); mountain climbing; arctic training; nordic ski training; courses in England; Ranger courses in Australia; and regimental deployments to Texas and Georgia in the United States; Panama, Australia, French Guyana and the United Kingdom.

Moreover, Airborne members were expected to train to standard and beyond. While their battle drills were common to all light infantry, the Airborne performed them with an extra edge. According to my interviewees, they never let up. Every drill, every exercise, every alert was conducted as though they were in combat, so that such actions became instinctive. Training also affects the manner in which environments are perceived. Landscapes become terrain and are assessed for their tactical rather than aesthetic value. In this way new meanings are produced and legitimated. Schein (1985: 41) tells us that a "group forms a language of its own, attach-

es its own meanings to events, and develops assumptions about itself and its environment that begin to operate as silent filters on perceptions.”

*The Airborne was probably the only regiment that was ready for war. Any kind of war. Because they trained war all the time, going one step further and faster than any other man. It's like in the movies you know. Training Rambo.*

#### AIRBORNE MYSTIQUE

Throughout history, Airborne forces have always been enshrouded in the mystique of a corps d'élite (for history of paratrooping see Beaumont 1974). According to Cockerham (1973: 216), during the world wars, the “military needed rewards as inducements to fill airborne positions. Such inducements were necessary because an airborne operation behind enemy lines, with its high risk of serious injury or death, was a hazardous mission. A special esprit de corps was necessary for paratroop units. Airborne trainees were thus socialized to believe that they were elite, and they reflected their differential status with distinctive insignia.”

*The Airborne is different from the others. It gets the young guys coming in looking for a challenge. You know you're going to be parachuting, you'll be doing mountains, deserts, jungles, seeing other countries. So already, they've got the Airborne up on a pedestal. Then there's the maroon beret and all that that represents. The young guys know very well that the maroon berets are the first ones to go out on a shock or surprise attack. So there's a certain mystique about the Airborne, like it or not, and the challenge, young guys looking to get to know themselves better.*

Airborne forces captured the public imagination as nothing else in the way of ground warfare, including tanks — or even the equally dangerous gliders — had done since the decline of the cavalry. They created elitism through an ordeal that tested a man's courage and earnestness before combat. A University of California sociologist and former Israeli paratrooper Gideon Aran (1974: 150) writes: “Jumping can be viewed as a test which allows those who pass it to join an exclusive club.” Physical training represents the “ordeal” before admission to the elite order (Lopez-Reyes 1971: 176).

The myth of the warrior hero is ancient and has not faded with time. The warriors and warrior-kings of the old testament, the Icelandic and Norse sagas, the Iliad, the Nibelungenlied, the 47 Ronin are brothers under their

armour. The array of martial heroes around the world underlines the fact that viewing corps d'élite as mere tactical instruments misses their role as symbols of brotherhood, masculinity and even aggressivity (Beaumont 1974: 5).

"The airborne forces established a new image of combat leader. Even generals in the airborne had to be flat stomached and young. Physical stamina, important in the regular infantry, was crucial for the parachutist" (Beaumont 1974: 102). Numerous book titles reflect the Airborne elitist allure such as: *Military Elites* (Beaumont, 1974); *Elite Fighting Units* (Eshel, 1984); *The Red Devils* (Norton, 1971); *The Elite: The Special Forces of the World* (Pimlott, 1948); *Swords of Lightning* (White 1992); *The All Americans*; *The 82nd Airborne* (Thompson, 1988); *Band of Brothers* (Ambrose, 1992) and movies such as *The Longest Day* and *A Bridge too Far* documented their bravery in battle in World War II. The song from the film *The Longest Day* was the Canadian Airborne regimental march, and Airborne members learned the song (in English or French) by heart. The "efficacy of the visual media as a socializing agency...cannot be overestimated. Indeed, concepts such as heroism, morality and manhood are, if not invented, at least repeated and socially maintained with a high degree of symbolic consistency by the media" (Lewis 1985: 37).

Gibson (1994: 39) states that the new genre of war "books, movies and magazines"<sup>16</sup> feature relatively small male tribes. Either they are elite units, like the fighter pilots or commandos, within a large military bureaucracy or they are independent mercenary groups." This Hollywood atmosphere of elitism makes these groups appear more attractive and alluring. Studies on the influence of peer groups in the socialization process have isolated several factors which increase group cohesiveness and hence the influence of the groups on the individual member. One of them is attractiveness: "the more attractive the group, the greater the socializing impact of the group" (Jones 1985: 167).

Moreover, apart from considerations of the actual content of the genre, movies and television encourage audiences to dissociate and depersonalize experience, to view life as a movie. Lewis (1985: 24-26) points out, that not only are soldiers' particular perceptions symbolically mediated by the movies, but also their general attitudes and perceptions. For example, Commando members began to refer to Somalia as "Som" in the way that American soldiers had once called Vietnam "Nam."<sup>17</sup>



*Some soldiers did say it feels like we're in Nam here. We're going to call this the Som you know s o m, Somalia, Som like Nam for Vietnam. There was a parallel to be made. And of course, you get all the rough-and-toughs. The warrior myth was still very much there. But the myth is bigger than reality. I would certainly say that in the Somali period the myth was very much there.*

*They picked up terms like FNG from movies like Platoon. That's where they get a lot of their ideas from. I was fighting to get away from this American movie, macho image kind of stuff. It wasn't there earlier, it came in when all those movies started coming out. A lot of these troops grew up watching this sort of movie. And I feel that a lot of them had joined the Airborne to try to portray themselves as what they saw in these movies. Which really makes it hard to get realistic when it comes to the real operation.*

*All these Rambo movies, Platoon, and other Vietnam movies had an impact. People would wear bandanas around their heads. They'd seen all that in the movies. It really made my job difficult, enforcing the dress code and discipline. I wish none of these films had ever come out. I'd often see a soldier with a net tied around his head or something and ask him what movie he'd seen that in. I'd say "That's not part of your training, that is not your dress, get rid of it." They'd tie handkerchiefs around their head and pour water on it, and say "I'm just trying to stay cool." I'd say: "It's cool all right, get rid of it and get your proper hat on." So these Vietnam or Rambo macho movies really influenced the young troops. It caused us officers a lot of problems.*

Soldiers become the movie war hero fighting evil; the warrior-hero who acts aggressively under fire without regard for personal safety, takes the initiative, forces a confrontation, overcomes obstacles — kicks ass — in the vernacular. Yet it is precisely this type of behaviour which was inappropriate for Somalia. According to U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Brian O'Keefe, who served outside Mogadishu during Operation Restore Hope and now trains soldiers in the peacekeeping skills he learned in that environment, he came to realize that a "'show the flag and kick ass' approach was not good enough...we learned what it takes to conduct peacekeeping operations: negotiating skills, patience, and a whole lot of common sense" (quoted in Allard 1995: 73).

Humanitarian missions differ from combat missions in one important way: the intervening forces must cooperate with the local population. War, however,

requires soldiers to view the "other" as the enemy: "us" versus "them" and "good" versus "evil". Combat soldiers must be emotionally detached from their enemies in order to kill them, a task assisted by negative racial and cultural stereotypes (Miller and Moskos 1995: 625).

The tendency to detach oneself from the ongoing flow of events in the perceptual field is also a behavioural trait which movie-going and television make possible (Lewis 1985: 23). One cannot help but reflect on the use of personal video cameras leading soldiers to pose and posture during hazing rituals in CFB Petawawa or the sequence of home videos taken in Somalia where a soldier points his weapon posing for the camera à la Hollywood, and the soldier describes a stick used for "crackin' little fuckin' Somalis, breaking arms legs and heads" as if speaking to an audience. There are also the disturbing photographs taken during the beating where MCpl Matchee poses with Shidane Arone like a game hunter with a trophy.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note that Belgian Airborne soldiers deployed to Somalia at the same time also kept photos of their beaten and abused Somali prisoners as trophies to be shown to friends, and it is in fact these photos which first alerted the Belgian public to the human rights abuses by these soldiers (See Auditorat général, Belgique 1993).

The "life as movie" process was also reinforced by the presence of media in Somalia. Commanders went out on patrols for the camera. Officers such as Capt Rainville presented a "rough and tough" image for newspapers prior to deployment. According to Lewis (1985: 37) "the efficacy of the visual media as a socializing agency...cannot be overestimated." Thus key concepts are, if not invented, at least repeated and socially maintained with a high degree of symbolic consistency by the media. Encounters with the media reinforce an idea that experience is to be objectified and cast in terms of viewer and viewed. In addition, other people are reduced to the role of players and scenery.

#### BAD BOYS

Along with the mystique of warrior hero comes the image of bad boys. The bad boy image of elite troops is in fact grounded in reality. What is significant is the implications of a "boys will be boys" attitude for delinquent groups. It gives implicit approval to certain behaviour such as heavy drinking, small offences since the "boys" need to "let off steam."

*The guys would get bored. There's not much to do in the middle of Petawawa hundred and twenty miles to Ottawa. Nobody would want to go to Pembroke I guess. They'd go shooting on the range or simply drinking beer behind the barracks. They're mischievous, like when the MPs [military police] drove by, they would throw bottles at the MPs and when the MPs stop the car and get out, two guys run away and these guys chase them. Well, they're never going to catch two Airborne soldiers. While the MPs were chasing the soldiers, the rest of them went over and flattened their tires. They're mischievous, they want to have some fun with the MPs or with the orderly sergeants. Light a fire on the parade square and he'll come and stamp it out and who knows what's in the bag that's on fire there. There's nothing for them to do. So they'll go break some bottles, go wake somebody up, see who they can piss off. This is just mischief, it's something that troops do, they don't have to be Airborne troops, it's something that troops do. There is a lot of immaturity in the troops, you know there is a lot of younger troops. Those are the problems that we didn't used to have. There used to be older troops in the Airborne. As the Airborne progressed the troops got younger and younger. Now you're dealing with all two, three year privates with an average age of about 21 or 22. That's not fully grown up in their minds, but they think they are. They're still mischievous. You know they're training all day long and at night they want to blow off some steam. These guys play with grenades and stuff all day long, and that appealed to them. They want to play with stuff like that at night, guns and stuff. That's the way they are.*

The Canadian military is often tolerant towards its "bad boys". For example, MGen (ret) Lewis MacKenzie testified to the Commission that:

some of my troublemakers that I took with me [to Cyprus] were just absolutely the most outstanding soldiers I had. What I'm trying to say is that taken by itself an event that is serious -- we really are a rehabilitation organization at times and you would be amazed at some of our successes and you would be amazed when the proverbial is hitting the fan who is there on either side of you. And some of them have a record, and for a commanding officer to investigate to determine that some of these people are troublemakers, but to know the mission he's going into and to think that he can turn them around is not unusual....I don't find that surprising, that he would say, no, I want that guy, he's tough, he's going to take a lot of supervision, but taking a chance on him is not unusual (Testimony of MGen (ret) MacKenzie, Commission of Inquiry Vol 43 February 1, 1996: 8515-8516).

As discussed in the conclusions to Chapter 3, the idea of "letting off steam" uses a pressure cooker approach to aggression. This may not be an effective way of de-escalating built-up tension and frustration. E.O. Wilson warns us against picturing aggression as something constantly applying pressure against the walls of its containers (Freud/Lorenz model of human aggression). Rather, aggression may arise due to a pre-existing mix of attitudes and experiences that can be ignited by specific catalysts (such as alcohol or humiliation) added at a later time. Thus, aggression is a result of the cumulative impact of a combination of circumstances ultimately leading to uncontrolled violence.

According to Beaumont (1974: 192): "Elite forces are virtually encapsulated delinquency in many instances...almost every elite force of the twentieth century has cut close to or across the laws of war at one point. "Delinquency among youth has long been recognized as a function of peer group membership" (see discussion on rampage initiation rites). The following description could apply equally well to youth gangs or to certain units in the Airborne: "They have an affinity for the romantic role of the outlaw, which is perhaps the only status in which they feel they can stand out as individuals" (Shello and Roemer 1966: 19). Capt Yuzichuck testified to the Board of Inquiry: "there's a big esprit de corps in the Airborne Regiment, however, sometimes people get a big ego out of it. And they're what we call 'bar commandos'. They're not too good in the field but when they hit the local scene they're the rough, tough Airborne soldiers" (Testimony of Capt Yuzichuck BOI: 673).

The frequency with which elite forces of many nations indulged in excesses (see Beaumont 1974 for details) also suggests how these units resembled a primitive warrior band. The recurrence of tribal symbols, tattoos, images and initiation rites resembles the same primitive aesthetic. If being "bad boys" qualifies for membership in the elite club then the Airborne — or at least some of them — were in. There have been a number of examples of which we will mention a few. During their tour in Cyprus in 1981 "some sixty soldiers from 1 Commando descended on a Nicosia disco armed with clubs and bats and savagely beat men and women in a crowd that numbered in the hundreds" (Bercuson 1996: 207). In the mid-1980s a young Airborne soldier in Fort Coulonge, north of Petawawa, was in a bar and decapitated someone with a machete. He was eventually charged in a civilian court, tried and convicted of manslaughter. In 1985, the Chief of Defence Staff ordered a review of antisocial



behaviour in Mobile Command, and in particular the Special Service force of which the Airborne were a part. This report became widely known as the Hewson Report after MGen Bill Hewson, the Chief of Intelligence at the time. The Hewson Report arrived at a number of disturbing conclusions about the CAR, for example, that there were higher rates of violent crime in the Regiment than in other mobile command formations. One year before deployment to Somalia, Capt Rainville, later of 1 Commando, led his men on a daring raid of the Van Doos headquarters in Quebec City. Capt Rainville was also implicated in an unauthorized commando style exercise at CFB Gagetown in 1992 (see Bercuson 1996: 227 for details).

#### HORIZONTAL STRESS: THREE COMMANDOS

What is particularly significant is the independence enjoyed by each of the commando units. The three Commandos kept a separate and distinct character each forming a subculture of the Airborne. *Frequently there wasn't a lot of contact between the commandos. You've got to remember this was a regiment and there were mini-formations and COs for each commando and there was a certain amount of independence.* This distinctiveness was encouraged in a number of ways including separate residences for each Commando in Petawawa and "friendly" competitions such as athletics.

*You still had friends from other units but the Airborne were always together. We were always together. I had other friends but most of the time I went anywhere socially or whatever it would be my own Commando guys together. We played baseball together, others went hunting and fishing together. You work with them all the time, so we knew each other. Each Commando pretty much stuck together. I guess it was just one of these unwritten rules.*

The vertical command structure integrated each part of the Commando into the level above it but not to similar levels in other Commandos. For example the Airborne Indoctrination Course had formerly been held for all Airborne initiates together but by 1991 each Commando was running its own indoctrination course. The purpose for this was to develop Commando cohesion and to overcome the logistic difficulties of bringing all the Commando initiates together at one time. The result was that it created a situation where separate group identities could evolve.

*And senior NCOs and officers complained about it, just in social circles. Saying that on one hand competition apparently builds character, and on the other hand it affects teamwork. There were certain definitions to different commandos and each established their own characteristics. So officers would shrug their shoulders and say: "What do you expect they're 1 Commando, that's just the way they are" or "They're 2 Commando, that's the way they behave, that's the way they act, that's their attitude."*

Commandos acted in concert in training exercises but each Commando platoon would be responsible for a specific task. Thus members would not mix with each other while in training. The rationale behind this was, again, to build unit cohesion at the lowest levels. The result was that the Commandos became closed subcultures. However, this is the way soldiers train and have been training for war since World War II.

If the weakening of personal motivation were not counterbalanced by some other force, the desire to fight would rapidly diminish. The additional force necessary to keep the men's determination to continue in combat at a high level stems from the effects of the combat group, and is recognized as group morale. It is therefore more than the simple sum of the individual motivations found in the men before they came into combat. It is the result of the interpersonal relationships...and, specifically, of the intense loyalty stimulated by the close identification with the group. The men are now fighting for each other and develop guilty feelings if they let each other down...the men seem to be fighting more for someone than against somebody. Individuality, the personal fate of one man, becomes of secondary importance (Grinker and Spiegel 1945: 45).

The idea is that if a group trains and works hard together, trust and interdependence build. *The Airborne was different from the army. I don't think you'll find unit pride as high anywhere. If I needed help I knew that my buddies were right behind me.* Another reason behind the separateness among the Commandos was that the army did not want a fourth regiment. Other armies have a separate airborne regiment/division which has its own cohesive, integrated structure on a par with other regiments/divisions. But the Canadian army did not want this, so the Airborne became a unit where soldiers and officers were sent temporarily. Career advancement was to take place in the parent regiment.

As a result of all this, each Commando seemed to have its own personality. 1 Commando (from the R22eR) was flavoured by its French

Canadian culture and linguistic specificity. It seemed to specialize in winning sports competitions. 2 Commando (from the PPCLI) members portrayed themselves as the rebels, cowboys, wild ones — “the hardest meanest fighting section,” while 3 Commando (from the RCR) seemed to maintain an attitude of “quiet professionalism.” 3 Commando called itself the “mountain commando” and spent summers mountain climbing. Each Commando set its own policy concerning discipline, matters such as pin-ups and the display of rebel flags, and alcohol consumption in Petawawa and, naturally, in Somalia as well. Our interviewees had quite a bit to say on the difference between the Commandos when asked.

*The three Commandos each had a distinct personality. 1 Commando they were more the sports commando. The sports competitions and stuff they usually won. I would say 3 and 2 Commandos were pretty well on par — but ah it was noted by different regimental commanders that if there was a real hard job on an exercise it was given to 2 Commando because they knew no matter how hard, they'd get the job done. So that gave the guys in 2 Commando a little bit more of an ego.*

*In sports, the 2 Commando would go out and play but didn't put every single ounce of energy into it. They're more interested in getting on with the soldiering business. 1 Commando can go and play sports, and be happy to win. I see a difference between 1 and 2 Commando. If there was a parade somewhere, 3 Commando would be the guys to send. They're the guys that spend a lot more time on spit and polish and parades and stuff. There are a lot of good soldiers in 3 Commando and the RCR regiment. They put 2 Commando out in the trenches, and put 3 Commando over here where everybody can see them.*

*1 Commando is French, so that's the big distinction. 3 Commando is from the Maritimes. They were pretty friendly with the French. Many of them could speak French well. 2 Commando, that's the gang of red necks from out West. They just hate the French. And they're the ones we had all the problems with. They were apart from the rest. They had more trouble with the more complicated operations. For lots of problems, it was the 2 Commando, with their rebel flag. Well, the French had their fleur de lis, too. That's where the conflicts started, the rebels on one side, the fleur de lis on the other. And there was a time, in the eighties, when we were avoiding each other. But we worked together all right when we had to, like on a jump, the Regiment parachuted together. It's just our origins, our*

*different ways of working, that kept us apart. The RCR are very proud — very strict and polished and such. The 22s [Van Doos] were more relaxed, less stressful about rules and regulations, but we still got the job done. We respected the rules, but not like the English. The English were very severe. The other groups considered the 22s pretty slack.*

*The different personalities of the three commandos go way back to their regiments of origin. There were three different regiments: the 22s, who were French, the RCRs who mostly come from the East and then the PPCLI, mostly from out West. That's where the differences start. There can be some friction between the English and the French. They don't work the same way. The friction between the three regiments goes way back, too. The soldiers come from their own regiments and they come together as commandos, but there's a lot of competition. Like for the French commando it wasn't important for the soldiers to compete amongst themselves but to beat out the "goddamn" English.*

Small groups can usually generate a powerful field of forces for the individual, inducing conformity to its norms whatever they be. If those norms support the institution norms and goals (as in unit cohesion and sharpness) they are not only tolerated by the institution but encouraged and organized for that purpose (Schein 1961: 274). New Airborne members soon learned the distinctive style of their commando unit (riding a Harley-Davidson in off hours, for example).

Athletic competition between the Commandos was encouraged by commanders for reasons other than just developing team spirit. It reflected on them as well. This was noted as early as the 1960s in other military units.

Each subordinate commander assumed that a relative superiority in the outcome of the contest would be evaluated by the higher commander as evidence of greater competence in inducing collective effort among the members of his unit.... The event was represented to members of the unit as an opportunity to demonstrate collective superiority over competing units. Since the subordinate commander represented his unit to superior commanders, the collective achievements of the unit became a measure of the competence of the subordinate commander (Little 1964: 215).

Miedzian (1991: 35) points out that constant competition prepares people to think in us/them and win/lose terms. The competition among the



Commandos sometimes gave way to friction which in turn gave way to animosity. Promoting pride through “friendly competition” is one thing but in the context of the Franco–Anglo split in Canada the competition became intense. For example, members of 2 Commando burned the fleur de lis flag in front of 1 Commando barracks in Petawawa.

So, even before they left for Somalia, the three Commandos had been behaving autonomously, acting on their own and developing their own distinct identities which affected the entire unit’s ability to work together.

*Prior to the summer of 1992, when the Airborne regiment was reorganized, the unit was commanded by a colonel with three units underneath him each commanded by a lieutenant-colonel. And each of these lieutenant-colonels, were commanding officers in their own right. And therefore they were essentially running their outfit the way they wanted to, which could very well be different than the others. The colonel was more or less supervising, organizing, but not really directing the unit to all do the same thing. They had a lot of autonomy. When it was reorganized with one lieutenant-colonel and, essentially, three majors, the big change was that autonomy was lost. There was one man in charge and that was a lieutenant-colonel, and part of his job was to ensure that all three commandos were following the same rules, had the same practices, had the same level of discipline, had the same approach. However, they still continued to operate as three independent units. This is why you see a difference in behaviour in theatre between the three units.*

*Essentially you had three different units in Somalia. Three different units having three different standards, having three different marching tunes. For example, when you hear that one of the commandos had a certain policy on how many beers they could have, other ones had a different policy. Well in a unit, the way the Airborne was restructured then, that should not be acceptable. There should have been one policy set by the commanding officer. Majors don’t set policies.*

Due to this lack of cohesion the CAR was unable to function effectively as a unit. Of particular note is 2 Commando’s identity of aggressive, wild warrior. This was evident in discipline problems which emerged even before 2 Commando left for Somalia. As early as 1984 discipline at CFB Petawawa had deteriorated to such an extent that the Special Service Force Commander sent a memo to the commanding officer of the base

pointing out the lack of control over soldiers, disobedience, incidences of impaired driving, inadequate control of stores, ammunition, equipment, pyrotechnics and weapons resulting in thefts or losses and assault (Bercuson 1996: 207-208).

#### VERTICAL STRESS: NON-COMMISSIONED MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The rotation and command structure 'caused difficulty for the Airborne in several ways since there was a tendency for the NCMs to be more permanent in the unit than the officers who were perceived by the men as just "passing through." There were several reasons for this.

The Airborne symbolized the purity of the traditional army model. It was intended as a leadership nursery, in addition to being a deployable resource. You rotate leaders in for a couple of years and they get their dose of macho life and real military stuff and then they rotate back out (Cotton presentation to Commission of Inquiry February 16, 1996).

*The officers come and go. They come in, and spend maybe a year, and then go on to a staff job, and all of a sudden they come back a couple of ranks higher. Instead of the platoon commander they're now the company commander. Whereas the ranks have been there doing the same thing day in or out for years, for an officer it's a change. So we're looking at him and saying we just finished that with the last guy, and now we're going to start over. So every year it's repetitive. The same training thing and the officer's getting his ticket punched. We feel we're being used as training tools for the officers. So we get very good at what we're doing, and a lot of the time we knew they were coming to learn their job. And that's where the senior NCOs come in and the warrant officers. And their job is to help that officer to learn his job, and kind of to give him good guidance. And that's one of the problems we're having right now, is that some of the warrant officers are just letting them in, not giving them good guidance. Platoon commanders were meant to be lieutenants, that's the way the army's set up. But in the Airborne they have captains. Once an officer, they seem to go from lieutenant to captain. They become smarter overnight — or at least they think they're smarter. That I believe contributes to some of the problems in the Airborne.*

Thus, Airborne officers would be attached to the unit for usually two to three years while NCMs would stay longer. It appears that this led to

stronger bonding among the lower ranks and the opportunity for charismatic leaders to emerge among the NCMs. Again, this is reminiscent of World War II combat training strategies where primary group relations embodied in the squad or platoon were apparently very important sources of social support.<sup>19</sup> However, group formation can also be a challenge to good order and discipline. In the Airborne, male bonding among the lower ranks would cut through and contradict the more formal chain of command. Privates, corporals and master corporals constituted a subgroup.<sup>20</sup> This was noted by the Board of Inquiry.

Certain events occurring recently and over the last several years provided the Board with sufficient evidence to conclude that there was and may still be, specifically in 2 Commando, an informal group at the junior rank level which poses a direct challenge to authority...

It is quite natural that, within a company-sized formation, peer groups with their informal leaders form at the junior rank level....Often, the future junior non-commissioned officers are selected from the emerging informal leadership of these groups. Loyalty forms and bonds members of these groups. They are young and dynamic and, from time to time, get into trouble. They live in quarters together and, in a relatively isolated base like Petawawa, tend to spend even their weekends and holidays together, relaxing with those with whom they share common interests and values. The problem arises when these interests and values run counter to accepted norms.... At this stage, such individuals present a serious challenge to formal authority...(BOI Annex D: 1).

BGen Beno noted a high turnover of officers combined with multiple tours by NCMs in the Airborne Regiment.<sup>21</sup> The constant rotation of leaders appears to be a major source of irritation with the unit as in other infantry units: "The Army has become a big Merry-Go-Round. We are the horses unable to move, the Officers ride us for free, and our NCO's try to keep the system together" (master corporal quoted in Cotton 1979: 39). It was a perception within the CAR that the junior combat personnel were the "victims" of frequent career development among officers.

And while the officers cycled in and out, the men stayed and stayed. This could foster the emergence of informal hierarchies and the formation of subgroups. According to Cotton (1979: 8) "the greatest differences in military attitudes are between the Combat Arms officers and the troops they lead at the Master Corporal rank and below." A primary aspect of the social

system of the Airborne platoon was a network of interpersonal linkages which could, at times, contradict the more formal concepts of the chain of command and centralized control. Thus united, the members of the platoon comprised a group with a potential for collective action independent of orders given by the designated leaders of the chain of command.

Ambrose (1992: 19) describes airborne identification in the U.S. Army which worked downward from the Army to the airborne to the battalion to the company to the platoon to the squad to small entities of three or four men: core elements within the "families" of squads or sections. These small entities "would literally insist on going hungry for one another, freezing for one another, dying for one another. And the squad would try to protect them or bail them out without the slightest regard to consequences." In studies of airborne units both Cockerham (1973: 226) and Lopez Reyes (1971: 183) found such fierce loyalty that 60 percent said they would never serve in a non-airborne unit. Even though primary group cohesion in ordinary army units has been observed as breaking down (occupational values becoming dominant), in elite forces it remains strong (Cockerham 1978: 12). Within the CAR, because of the nature of parachuting, lower ranks were also given more responsibility and more leeway. This is what attracted some men to the Airborne.

Another form of interpersonal linkages was the informal buddy system. "The buddy role was an expectation of mutual loyalty and reciprocity attributed to another person at the same relative level in the organization" (Little 1964: 199). This bond existed between Matt McKay and Clayton Matchee. For those of us in civilian life it doesn't make sense that a right-wing extremist like Matt McKay<sup>22</sup> and Clayton Matchee, a Cree, could become buddies. This is because, as outsiders, we do not understand the bonding process which can take place between men in combat units. Perhaps their friendship was established like the following description of two American recruits at Parris Island.

Earnest Winston, the self-professed [Black] gang member from Washington, is assigned to share a pup tent with Recruit Prish, the former Mobile skinhead. "It was weird" Recruit Prish says later. But they happily find common ground in anti-Semitism. "We both agreed the Jews owned the first slave ship" he reports (Ricks 1995: 4).

Perhaps Matchee and MacKay found some comfort knowing that, "in 1941, armed with optimism and having declared Indians to be fellow Aryans, Josef



Paul Goebbels, German Minister of Propaganda, predicted that Indians would rather revolt against the United States than fight against a Germany which had promised to return their expropriated land to them" (Franco 1990: 1). This leads us to the question of ethnic minorities in units like the Airborne.

#### CONCLUSIONS: AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Cotton (1993) tells us that the Airborne were xenophobic. It is difficult to determine if this term accurately describes the Airborne. In fact, it might be more useful to see the Airborne as an inclusive society; one that is difficult to penetrate if a person is different than the ideal type of masculine White warrior but if a person manages to penetrate the envelope then they are in and they are Airborne and that is all that counts. Witness the solidarity that Cpl Robin felt for the unit on the Commission of Inquiry's witness stand. He does not seem to feel that the Airborne treated him "differently" because of his race. In fact, he is a Pathfinder — the best of the best.

Two native Canadians, Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown were implicated in the torture and beating death of Shidane Arone. There has been little or no research on the situation of minorities in the Canadian military. What little we know about adopting dominant values of a military unit comes from research done on women in the U.S. Air Force, Black police officers in the United States and on minority groups in general. For example, literature on the glass ceiling in the corporate world talks about how minority groups in the United States try harder than White males but do not seem to be able to get ahead. Those that do succeed feel they have to be better than good, they have to be the best, most qualified, etc.

According to Jones (1985: 197): "In those cases where soldiers... are in the minority they may in fact be quite susceptible to pressures to adopt the values and behavioural patterns of the dominant group." Jones feels that the hardships of military life and the common goals involved in training within a military unit help to minimize ethnic tensions in most units and to make the minority soldier more susceptible to peer group pressures. Parmar (1994), working in an ethnically diverse India, found that as bonds within groups are strengthened, individual identity comes to be defined by membership in the group.

If your primary identification comes to be based on membership in a group, as you oppose this group what happens to your identification? If you deviate from

it, who are you then? It can become threatening to even internally separate yourself. If you begin to think that something your group does is a problem or is wrong, that may demand of you to publicly separate yourself by speaking out or taking action. But this endangers you, not only in terms of what those in power will do to you, but in terms of who you are, and how your friends and colleagues look at you. In contrast, alignment with the group strengthens your bond to others and affirms your identity (Staub 1995: 104).

The tentative argument suggested here is that a member of a minority might adopt exaggerated behaviour of what he perceived to be the accepted group norm in order to be accepted by the group. There has been no conclusive evidence gathered on this subject; however, studies on policing since the 1960s help build a convincing argument concerning the behaviour of minorities in a position of authority over minority populations. A number of these studies, based mostly on American cases, indicate that Black policemen have often adapted a more negative attitude and a more aggressive behaviour toward other Blacks than would their White counterparts.

...some black officers have apparently held, or developed, prejudicial attitudes toward black citizens. In a mid-1960's study conducted in Boston, Washington and Chicago, it was found that 28 percent (N=43) of the black officers working in a predominantly black neighborhood had negatively prejudicial attitudes toward black citizens. Of the remaining officers, 21 percent were neutral, 7 percent had positive prejudicial attitudes and 16 percent had no discernible proclivity (Kuykendall and Burns 1978: 9).

Prejudicial attitudes of black officers can result in inappropriate police behavior. There is some evidence that black officers have been "harder" on black citizens than have white officers. In a 1950's study in Philadelphia some officers believed this to be true but some also felt that black officers were "easier" in their treatment of black citizens. The majority of black officers believed it was necessary to be "stricter" with their "own" people than they were with non-blacks (Kephart, 1957: 60-62).

...the few studies comparing black and white officers find the latter to be much less prejudiced (Jacobs and Cohen 1978, 171).

In a study (Wallach and Jackson 1973: 394) involving 50 respondents from a western district community of the City of Baltimore, described as an urban Negro community:

Twelve respondents believe that black officers have a better understanding of the community and its residents, while eight see black officers as rougher, tougher, or more brutal than white officers. No respondents reported that white police were more brutal than black police (Wallach and Jackson 1973: 394).

Although the attitude and behaviour differences of some Black police officers can be observed, the motivations for such behaviour and attitudes are not clearly understood. Two different reasons are suggested, relating, in turn, to the position of Black police officers in Black communities and to their position as Black police officers on a predominantly White police force. First of all, Black police officers patrolling dominantly Black neighbourhoods are perceived as needing to assert their authority among Blacks. It is assumed that their badge will not suffice. Some authors suggest that it is the attitude of Black citizens, mostly young men, that inclines Black officers to adopt this position.

When Negro police first went on patrol in this city, many Negro toughs boasted that no Negro police were going to arrest them. As a result the pioneers had to win respect in the Negro lower-class districts by the strength of their arms, and they had to make many charges for such offences as idling and loitering before their authority was established. Generally speaking, Negro policemen have the reputation of being stricter with Negro offenders than white policemen would be (Banton 1964: 174, see also Alex 1969).

Many authors go further, citing not only the Black officer's relation to the Black community, but also his relationship with other White officers and his need to prove himself, to "fit in," as a cause for adopting a particularly aggressive approach with Black citizens.

The officer must deal with the expectation of members of his race that he will treat them more sympathetically. At the same time he experiences widespread racism among his white colleagues. His adaptational strategies range from denying the significance of race to harsher treatment of blacks (Jacobs and Cohen 1978, 171).

Black policemen are substantially less prejudiced, but there is some evidence that their marginality forces them to accommodate their affinity for their own race with the requirements of law enforcement and their desire for acceptance on the force. Consequently some black officers hold negative attitudes toward some segments of the minority community. (Jacobs and Cohen 1978: 172).

[T]he black officer is especially sensitive to affronts to his authority; he desires acceptance among white policemen; he may feel he is acting on behalf of the welfare of the law-abiding black community" (Jacobs and Cohen 1978: 174).

Alex's *Black in Blue*, (1969) describes this situation quite clearly from the Black officer's point of view, emphasizing the problem of identifying with the group.

I am in a ticklish situation. How so? Let's say I have to decide if I am going to be a policeman first or a Negro first. If I am a policeman first, I ostracize the other Negroes. If I am a Negro first, there goes my job. So I don't know (interview excerpt from Alex 1969: 163).

Alex found (1976) that Black officers are challenged more by young Blacks and may feel a need to prove to the Black community that they are a power with which to be reckoned. On the other hand, they may also need to prove to the White officers that they are in control, are tough and will not give any advantages to other Blacks (Sullivan 1989: 342). An article in *The New York Times* in 1988 is particularly telling of the inner turmoil involved in this sort of relationship:

"It was destroying me as a black man," said Sergeant Jackson, who is 29 years old, a graduate of California Lutheran College and the son of a retired Los Angeles police officer. "When I joined the force eight years ago I went along with the racial slurs in order to be accepted by the police fraternity. It began to turn me against my own people. I began to see fellow blacks as untrustworthy, as thieves and criminals. I began to shut myself off from my family and friends." Officer Jackson said he did not begin to feel better until he started to speak out against racists in the department (Williams 1988: 26).

An urban American police force is quite evidently less a total institution than the military can be said to be. And yet, the need to identify with the group and to adopt its values, or at least a behaviour that reflects those values is evident and sufficiently documented. If this can be said of the police force, one would logically assume similar dynamics to be possible and probable in the military.

The only relevant military study located was Dunivin's (1988) Ph.D. study of military (air force) women and identification with reference groups. Dunivin found that these women considered themselves as excep-



tions to the “typical” woman. They distanced themselves from other women and criticized fellow women in order to demonstrate their worth to their important reference group, air force men. Such actions suggest that the normative order of the air force is so rigidly defined along masculine standards that women feel the need to exhibit non-feminine behaviours and attitudes. If we extrapolate to the Airborne, we might argue that the normative order of the Airborne was so White male warrior dominant that minorities felt the need to exhibit these behaviours in order to be accepted and get ahead. In fact they might feel pressured into exhibiting exaggerated behaviours.

Women accept military men as their primary work reference group. As a minority group (less than 15%) they identify more with men than women, thus do not view themselves as other women...they worked in a masculine culture that fosters masculine attitudes and behaviours....They distanced themselves from other women, internalizing an individualistic identity. They even shared sexist attitudes with men, describing other women (including fellow Air Force female officers) as “airheads”, “bubble heads” and “wimps” (Dunivin 1988: 61).

Dunivin (1988: 62) reports that the long-term impact of this kind of behaviour is disassociation. Women became token in the androcentric (male biased) culture of military.

They responded in a reactive vs. a proactive way - they could not change it...so they approached the social world as individuals and tried to become insiders. To assimilate into the masculine social world of the military the women subordinated and sacrificed their gender roles and identities to conform to male standards (Dunivin 1988: 62).

For our purposes, it is difficult to make comparisons between ethnic minorities in the Airborne and the women in Dunivin’s study yet the work is interesting and compelling. Women in Dunivin’s study accepted fellow military officers (primarily men) as their primary reference group. From their interaction with the male reference group, the women internalized the male-defined work identity and role. Furthermore, they assimilated into the androcentric social world, adapting their roles to conform to male standards. Consequently, they accentuated work roles that were rewarded in the military, and downplayed devalued gender roles. It is possible that in an inclusive and exclusive subculture such as the Airborne, minorities would also accentuate aggressive behaviour that was socially rewarded

and encouraged, and downplay devalued attitudes such as empathy. Cpl Eric Adkins, a medical orderly, described Clayton Matchee as "an Indian with an attitude." For whatever reason, he was going to prove something - how much a man he was. How much of a paratrooper he was. Brown, on the other hand, just wanted to fit in" (Cited in Worthington and Brown 1997: 86-87). A psychological assessment of Kyle Brown, done by Dr. Don Boisson, characterized Brown's profile as a type for whom the "approval" of those he respected was all-important "such as in Brown's case, his commando unit" (Cited in Worthington and Brown 1997: 258).



Delivering supplies





## *Somalia*

*We were like aliens to them and they were like aliens to us.  
I've never seen anybody as tall and skinny, wearing a dress,  
and with a big knife hanging off his belt.  
And the knife was to cut up camels and skin goats,  
that's how they lived, they're nomads.*

CF soldier

No anthropologist worthy of the title can undertake a study of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) in Somalia without also considering Somali culture. This chapter examines Somalia and Somali culture in order to explain what the CAR were facing when they arrived in Belet Huen. This is done in order to understand the magnitude of the impact cultural differences had on the Airborne as they found themselves in a fundamentally different cultural environment. Much of the information for this chapter came from the testimony of Dr. Ken Menkhaus to the Commission of Inquiry. Dr. Menkhaus is not only a recognized expert in his field of African studies, he was also an advisor to the U.S. troops deployed to Somalia.

This chapter considers the political and socio-economic context in which the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group (CARBG) carried out its mission. It provides general background information on the geography, culture, political and social structure of this region in the Horn of Africa up to the time when the CARBG was deployed to Somalia in 1992. It also describes the historical background and significant events leading up to the civil war and the end of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. Finally, it examines the situation in Somalia at the time the United Nations (UN) decided to intervene in 1992 and the social and political conditions in Belet Huen at the time the CARBG was deployed there.

## A PROFILE OF SOMALIA

The Somali Democratic Republic is in the Horn of Africa, with the Gulf of Aden to the north, and the Indian Ocean to the east and south. It thus occupies a strategic position in the Horn. Although it has ties to other African countries, in both religious and historic terms, the country has close links with the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>1</sup> When the CARBG arrived in Somalia, the country had a population of approximately six million people, of which two million or so were refugees (Wyllie 1993: 71).

In this overwhelmingly pastoral country, permanent settlements are widely scattered, being for the most part tiny trading centres built around wells. Only 15 percent of the population live in urban areas.<sup>2</sup> There are some forested areas along the two rivers — the Shebelle and the Juba. The fertile strips of arable lands bordering these two rivers permitted agricultural production. The town of Belet Huen, where the Airborne was stationed, is on the banks of the Shebelle River. There are just a few large towns like Belet Huen in the agricultural regions. Mogadishu is the capital. The other main centres are Hargeisa, capital of the northern regions, and Berbera and Kismayu, the principal northern and southern ports.

The climate is very hot and humid for most of the year with mean daily highs of 30° to 40°C and temperatures ranging from 17° to 45°C. The great national Somali poet Mohamed Abdile Hassan once described the climate: "Hot wind and heat, which will lick you like a flame" (Cahill 1980: 18). There are two wet seasons in the northeast: April to July and a lesser one from October to November. Major flooding often occurs during these monsoon seasons and higher elevations experience much greater precipitation than lower ones. Precipitation during the rainy season, and the resultant flooding, create difficulties for cross-country movement in the northeast. During the dry seasons, cross-country movement in vehicles creates huge dust clouds which also make travel difficult. The winds in the desert and in the highlands can reach almost hurricane force, and when dust and sand are swept up into the air from June to September serious difficulties can arise. For example, CARBG vehicle and equipment maintenance was difficult, and special lubricants and fuels were required. In addition, visibility was restricted to a few metres so soldiers' separation from their units could pose a real danger. The sand also irritates skin and eyes. As well as the problems with equipment, the desert conditions of radiant heat, humidity and wind create climatic stress on the body. Chapter 6 details the effect of the Somali climate on Canadian soldiers.

The traditional Somali economy was closely intertwined with the country's semi-arid climate and environment where drought is frequent and rainfall highly localized. Camels were the most valued livestock since they can survive without water for almost a month and still continue to give milk which was an important part of the Somali diet. They also provided meat and transportation. Camel herding was considered the "most noble Somali calling" (Laitin, 1977: 21) and owning large numbers of camels was a clear sign of wealth. Cattle, goats and sheep were kept as well, but required more frequent watering.

The division of labour was thus organized around these differences.<sup>3</sup> A man's flocks were distributed among his wives while his camels were collectively managed with those of the kinsmen in his *diya* group (a compensation-paying group, different from a clan, which shares responsibility for *diya* — blood money — usually measured in camels, should one of their members murder, injure or insult someone from another group and be held to blame. A *diya* group both pays and receives blood money). Because Somali pastoral society developed in an environment of considerable scarcity, competition for wells and pasture lands caused endemic conflict.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, pastoralism also created a common bond among Somalis. According to Barnes and Boddy (1994: 294): "Pastoralism in Somalia is both a livelihood and an ethic: despite differences of clan membership, wealth, or class, Somalis share a set of values finely tuned to the requisites of a harsh, unforgiving desert."

Control of territory not only meant access to grazing but other sources of income as well. For example, prior to colonial occupation, a clan controlled access to its territory. Outside traders — Somalis and non-Somalis — who wished to pass through a clan's territorial stronghold had to pay protection money to a member of that clan. This practice appears to have been revived in modified form during international relief efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Somalis will tolerate outside Somalis in their area provided they identify themselves as guests, which is to say you are free to live here, you can do business here, if you try to move goods that would displace our economic opportunities you have to pay the toll and you may not make a bid for a political role in our affairs because you are a guest. That same understanding of the outsider informs their attitudes and interaction with internationals as well. This goes some way to explain the high level of extortion that we watched being placed on the international relief agencies in the famine and even the international

troops during the intervention. There were certainly extortion attempts, some successful toward the international forces.

That was to say, that you're welcome to stay in here in our clan territory, but if you value security - and the Somalis have a very keen sense of economics - surely you value security, therefore you're willing to pay for it, it's not free.

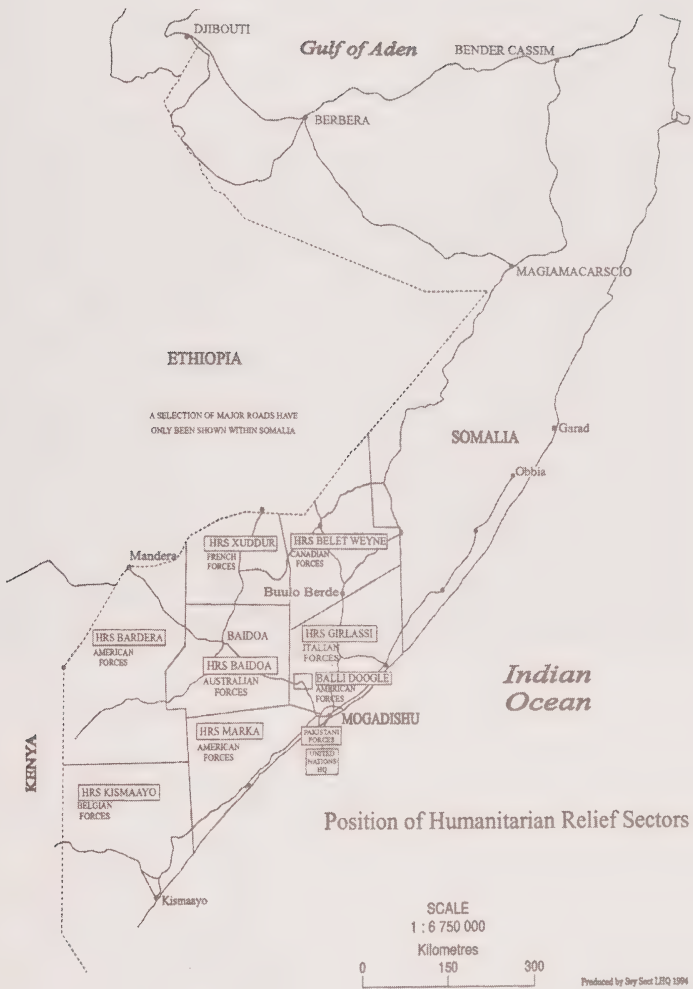
We found that outrageous. Security should be guaranteed by the local authorities, it's not something that we should be paying for, not subject to extortion but, in fact, in the Somali context was quite understandable.<sup>6</sup>

During colonial times camels, sheep, goats and cattle provided for the subsistence needs of about 75 percent of the population and provided substantial export trade in live animals, skins, butter and canned meat. After independence, exports of these items rose dramatically and outstripped the other main export, bananas. Despite disagreement as to certain facts and figures, it is clear that most of the economic production in modern Somalia was still related to the traditional practice of pastoral nomadism, except in the southern region where higher rainfall and river water permitted mixed farming and agro-pastoralism (Lewis 1988: 7).

After independence in 1960, economic growth failed to keep pace with the rise in population, expanded by the influx of refugees. This was in part due to the country's heavy dependence on agriculture and pastoralism which were, in turn affected by drought. There is little industrial development in Somalia which is not related to agriculture. For example, the largest industry in the country is the processing of agricultural food products (DND 1992b: 9/21). At the time of the UN intervention, minerals had been found in the country, but with the exception of tin, were not being developed. International companies have done some prospecting for oil.

Agriculture and pastoralism were thus the largest sectors of the economy, with crop production making up 10 percent of the country's gross national product (GNP) and employing 20 percent of the work force (DND 1992b: 8/21). Bananas were a major export crop while sugar, soybean and corn were grown for the domestic market.<sup>7</sup> Livestock and bananas were also the primary means of obtaining foreign exchange with Arab states which were large importers of Somali products. However, the livestock market had suffered a number of setbacks due to animal diseases which caused Somali animals to be banned by some Arab states (Makinda 1992: 35). Bananas have





MAP OF SOMALIA



Settlement along the Shebelle River

been Somalia's major cash crop and were grown on plantations along the Juba and Shebelle rivers.<sup>8</sup> The area between the two rivers also provided most of the subsistence crops of maize and sorghum.<sup>9</sup> Devastating droughts, along with huge numbers of refugees, combined with the civil war, affected all agricultural production in Somalia. For example by 1992, the seed stores in most parts of the country had been destroyed and few crops had been planted since 1990. In addition, the collapse of the government reduced the economy from that of a very poor country (In 1985 per capita GNP was about C\$340) to that of a country scraping by at subsistence levels. By the 1990s, Somalia was among the poorest countries in the world and was classified by the United Nations as a "least developed country" (Makinda 1992: 34).

#### SOMALI CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The contemporary population of Somalia is descended from camel herders who entered the Horn of Africa a least two millennia ago (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 290). By the seventh century, the indigenous Cushitic peoples had mixed with Arabs and Persians on the coast forming a Somali culture (Cahill 1980: 19) with common traditions, faith and language. The official language in the country is Somali, while Arabic, English and Italian are also used in government agencies. Besides a common language (there are only slight dialect differences between northern and southern Somali) Somalis share the Islamic faith, most being Sunni Muslim (IRB 1990: 129063).

Somalis are divided by occupation into two major groupings: the nomads — the Samale — and the cultivators — the Sab. These groups are further divided into clan-families,<sup>10</sup> which are sometimes simply called tribes, clans and lineages. In Somalia, descent is traced through the father, back several generations to a founding patriarch. Descendants in this male line make up a lineage (a patrilineage to use the precise term) which is named after the founding father. Larger groups are formed by tracing one's family even deeper in to the past to one of the six Somali clan-families. Beyond that, Somalis believe they are ultimately descended from one ancestor — the mythical Samaale.

The four northern clan-families are pastoral and constitute about 85 percent of the population (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 295). The two southern clan-families are associated with mixed pastoralism and farming.<sup>11</sup> These southern agricultural communities have social and political identities

linked more closely to the village than the clan. Agriculturalists are also weaker politically than the surrounding pastoral clans and are considered inferior in social status.<sup>12</sup>

What this means is that, in fact, we've got an appreciable portion of the Somali population that is quite ethnically and culturally distinct from the majority of the Somali community, and what's important about this is that this agricultural community - the clan name is the Rahanweyn - also happens to be the weakest portion of the population. Because they are settled agriculturalists, they do not have the same tradition, the same warrior tradition as the nomads, they are not as heavily armed, they were never as involved in the central government and when the Civil War broke out their home territory was the real estate over which more powerful clans and factions fought back and forth over their zone, they became the principal victims in the famine. This ethnic and cultural dimension to the Somali crisis was rarely captured adequately in the press.<sup>13</sup>

Members of a clan-family trace their genealogy back 30 generations to a common ancestor.<sup>14</sup> Clan-families are thus a massive federation of kinship groups dispersed over a wide area. Clan-families rarely co-operate as a unit. Instead, common interests and mutual aid occurs among smaller kin groups such as the clan (whose members trace their membership back 20 generations) and the lineage (6 to 10 generations) (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 295).

As Somalis themselves put it, what a person's address is in Europe, his genealogy is in Somaliland. By virtue of his genealogy of birth, each individual has an exact place in society and within a very wide range of agnatic [patrilineal] kinship it is possible for each person to trace his precise connection with everyone else (Lewis 1961: 2).

Clan groupings break down into smaller clans and sub-clans which are further divided into several generations (lineages) of particular families (IRB 1990: 3). What is important to remember is that clan identity was not fixed. According to Dr. Menkhaus it was fluid and complex enough to allow genealogical links to be recast according to the political needs of the moment. "A different clan identity could be highlighted or suppressed depending on the situation."<sup>15</sup> This was "a source of tremendous frustration for outsiders."<sup>16</sup> To a military with little understanding of the complexities of the local kinship system, misunderstanding and frustrations could arise. Thus clan identity:



was situational and it made for political units that were very unstable, very fluid and this was so frustrating for the international forces and civilian diplomats who were part of the intervention because they could not get a clean fix on political units in Somalia. They are very compelling reasons why this fluid situational political identity serves the interest of Somalis given their environment, but it didn't serve ours very well and it was a source of misunderstanding.<sup>17</sup>

There is, however, a sub-unit of the group which is most politically significant. This is the compensation-paying group and it constitutes a relatively stable unit in Somali society. It is "a corporate group of a few small lineages reckoning descent through from four to eight generations to the common founder and having a membership of from a few hundred to a few thousand men" (Lewis 1961: 6). The compensation-paying group shares "responsibility for *diya* — 'blood money' — usually measured in camels, should one of their members murder, injure, or insult someone from another such group and be held to blame. A *diya*-group both pays and receives blood money" and its members are sworn "to avenge injustice against their own with violence if no exchange of camels is agreed upon, and to defend each other materially or aggressively when they themselves do wrong" (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 295).

But this practice of blood compensation was very important, it did mitigate spiralling violence, it did allow for clans — it did in the past and it continues to, allow clans to negotiate an end to bloodshed and it also serves as a deterrent for personal vendettas and murder because an individual in a *diya*-paying group knows that if he commits murder he's not dragging just himself but the entire group into possibly paying a very expensive fine, camels are not cheap in Somalia. And so this served frequently as a deterrent.<sup>18</sup>

Implications of the *diya* system for international forces were important and needed to be understood. Because of the blood compensation groups, there is much more of a sense of corporate or collective guilt rather than individual guilt. So, if troops tried to suppress the level of petty thieving by hanging placards on thieves' necks to humiliate, this kind of tactic would be seen as trying to humiliate the entire clan, not punish particular individuals.<sup>19</sup>

Clan elders play a critical role in mediating and adjudicating disputes, using Somali customary law (*xeer*).<sup>20</sup> Clan elders often find themselves in negotiations mediating disputes between individuals to prevent them from

spilling over into inter-clan conflict (Menkhaus and Prendergast 1995: 7). In Somalia, conflict resolution is an ongoing process rather than an event, and the complexity of Somali conflict management often led to misunderstandings with international forces. As Dr. Menkhaus testified:

military units would treat a conflict as a discreet event, they'd bring in the clan elders, they would sit down and make a peace, there would be a document to prove it, and then there would be peace and we could all go away, when in fact that wasn't the case. In Somali political culture, conflict management never ends, they are always in dialogue, they're always meeting and it took us quite a long time to understand that to be effective in helping them manage their conflicts.<sup>21</sup>

There is also a form of assembly (*shir*) in which all adult males have a voice. This political tradition was highly egalitarian and open to all adult males. Elders, clerics, poets and, in contemporary times, businessmen and politicians within the clan may enjoy special prestige in the assembly, but cannot represent the clan in broader political matters without lengthy vetting procedures from their own clansmen. Accords and arrangements struck without ratification by the clan are not viewed as legitimate and are rarely upheld. This is important since this tradition meant that peace conferences which were held in isolation from the communities (in Nairobi or Addis Ababa or even Mogadishu) were not vetted by the local populations and were therefore not considered binding by them.<sup>22</sup>

### *Kinship*

Kinship is reckoned patrilineally, (through the male line) from a father to his sons and daughters much as family names are transmitted in Canada. Women remain lifelong members of their father's group and at marriage they do not adopt their husband's name when they go to live with his family. Bonds of blood supersede those of conjugal love, the former are permanent while the latter can be temporary and numerous divorces result from a woman's competing loyalties.

According to Somali custom, women's social status is inferior to men's and both sexes are firmly schooled to this from birth, believing that gender inequality is both normal and natural. (The next chapter describes soldiers' reaction to this.) Women are expected to submit to the authority of their fathers, brothers and husbands, be modest and exercise self-restraint. Women in Somalia are not veiled from head to toe. An important feature

of a Somali woman's life is the traditional practice of clitoridectomy and infibulation of the vagina, or "female circumcision."<sup>23</sup> In Somalia, as in other areas of Islamic North Africa, women's sexuality is thought to prevent them from achieving the same level of moral worth as men.<sup>24</sup>

Although women and men contribute complementary skills to the household, much of the hard physical work falls to women and the young. Boys and unmarried men tend the camel herds, married men engage in trade, clear wells and manage camels. Only senior men have the right to dispose of family property. A woman's security depends on her relationship to her father, husband, brothers and uncles, and her male kin are expected to watch over her should she decide to leave her husband. Women's dependency on male kin began to break down during the civil war when men were away and women began to participate more actively in the Somali economy.

The emphasis on patrilineal descent puts an emphasis on "purity of birth." Marriage with non-Somalis is forbidden even if both partners are Muslim, because those who have Somali mothers and non-Somali fathers cannot be members in a Somali clan. This means that the children of such a union cannot be placed in the Somali moral universe and, therefore, have to exist outside of it. Children of a Somali man and a non-Somali mother can be placed in the Somali moral universe but their position is hardly any better because they are not involved in networks organized around the female line. More important, non-Somalis and foreigners are looked down on and regarded with suspicion because they are not bound by the reciprocal rights and contractual trusts of Somali descent and kinship (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 300). This attitude is often perceived by outsiders as arrogance. The early explorer Sir Richard Burton (quoted in Cahill 1980: 18-19) described the Somalis as "a fierce race of Republicans, the Irish of Africa...they are full of curiosity and travel the world accepting almost any job without feeling a sense of inferiority, perhaps because they believe they are superior to everyone else."

The bonds of kinship can draw people together and also drive them apart in rivalries between clans or the subgroups within them. Clan relationships can be unifying or divisive, depending on the proximity of the relationship involved: the closer the linkage is, the more affinity the persons will feel, while he may turn on a fellow clan member or entire clan which is not closely related. This is a rather simple interpretation of Somali clan relations. A more in-depth analysis shows us that the

divisiveness has its roots in what can be described as a male-egalitarian system. Brothers can be allies by virtue of their shared father in a quarrel over grazing rights with their cousins (father's brother's sons) because they are sons of equals. But brothers can become enemies when they fight as equals over their father's property. It depends on the individual's relationship to the object of dispute.

Thus a person's political allegiance is owed first to the immediate family, next to the immediate lineage, then to the clan of the lineage, and then to the clan-family or tribe. This "lineage ethic" of Somalis is described by Menkhaus<sup>25</sup> as emphasizing "one's primary obligations to look after the interest of one's clan members first, even sometimes at the expense of other Somalis." This attitude enraged outsiders who could not understand why famine relief was not evenly distributed and emergency aid was being diverted by some for their own profit and that of their kin. Individual Somalis, responsible for famine relief, would be in a terrible situation of conflicting loyalties. The relief organization wanted the goods evenly distributed to famine victims while pressure was on from the clan to divert the bulk of aid to the clan in order to respect family obligations and responsibilities.<sup>26</sup>

A well-known Somali saying sums up the lineage ethic: "My cousin and I against the clan; my brother and I against my cousin; I against my brother." Within this system, lineages could easily form an alliance soon after fighting among themselves and kin who are supportive in one situation can be predatory in the next. Thus Somali society is "so integrated that its members regard one another as siblings, cousins, and kin, but also so riven with clannish fission and factionalism that political instability is the society's normative characteristic" (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 31).

#### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

Somali society was historically stateless, and political life was organized around mobile lineage units with a strong aversion to centralized authority.<sup>27</sup> The word Somali appears in no Arabic documents before the 16th century, yet according to Barnes and Boddy (1994: 291), such documents do refer to identifiable clan-families as early as the 14th century. Barnes and Boddy go on to suggest that this means that Somali political unity may be fairly recent, or more fiction than historical fact, a point clearly relevant to post World War II events. We do know that along the coasts



from the 13th century onward, settlements of Arabs, Persians and Islamized Somalis<sup>28</sup> grew into powerful mercantile city-states, of which Mogadishu, capital of the present republic, was one. In fact, up until the 1990s Mogadishu was well known as one of the safest cities in East Africa (Barnes and Boddy 1994: xviii, 292).

If Somali society was stateless, it certainly was not static. A pattern of movement existed in the 19th century and probably earlier, which some observers believe explains what happened in the 1990s.<sup>29</sup> In the 19th century, the dry pastoral environment in the central regions and the northeast was not able to sustain population and herd growth. There have been tremendous pressures in these areas on the land which led to a southward movement by the Somali pastoral groups.

A century ago...the agricultural clans were strong enough...to prevent them from moving in. Some moved in and assimilated with the agricultural clans, but most moved around, flooded south, by 1850 they crossed over the Jubba River and swarmed into what is today Northern Kenya all the way up to the Tana River displacing many, many other groups as they went. They were only stopped at that point by the British. In the late 19th century early 20th century, [the British] drew a line, said no Somalis south of the Tana River and that ended the southward migration of the Somalis...some of us are coming to understand the conquest of Mogadishu by the Habr Gedr clan of General Aydid as part of this long historical process of a surplus of young men in this area...moving south for opportunities to conquer and displace.<sup>30</sup>

### *Colonialism*

The strategic significance of Somalia increased dramatically with the completion of the Suez Canal. In the tangled diplomatic intrigues that ensued, Somalia was divided into spheres of foreign influence.<sup>31</sup> Lord Rennell, the English ambassador who negotiated the first Ogaden border agreement in 1887, freely acknowledged that the boundaries "were artificial; they bear no relation to geography or ethnography" (quoted in Cahill 1980: 29). In many ways the imposition of colonial rule led to the definition of Somalis as a single group. Until that time, Somalis saw themselves as belonging to a clan rather than to a nation. It was the common experience of colonialism which brought them together in a shared national experience and identity.

The arbitrary division of areas between the wells on the coastal plains and the rain-fed pastures in the interior wreaked havoc with the seasonal cycle of pastoral Somalis. Reaction to this disruption of herding, combined with aggressive advances into the Ogaden area by Ethiopia, spawned an early nationalist movement led by the religious sage Sayyid Mohammad Abdille Hasan. Violence was first directed against the Ethiopians and later against the Europeans.<sup>32</sup> This was one of the last armed resistance movements against European colonialism in Africa and it was stoked by appeals to anti-foreigner sentiment among the Somalis which remained a powerful political tool in the country in the 20th century.<sup>33</sup>

Colonialism imposed centralized rule on Somalia which most Somalis resented because their valued independence was compromised and, worse, they were subject to infidels (Touval 1963: 71). The capital was established in Mogadishu which doubled in population from 1930 to 1940. In the south, trade and commerce were strictly controlled by the Italian Fascists who barred Somalis from participation in any sector of the economy where they might rival their colonizers (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 329). Colonial activities were centred in urban and riverine areas where large scale plantations were set up. Towns grew and basic health and educational services were established.

Colonialism imposed on Somalia a central state and a capital in Mogadishu. These were very significant, maybe the most significant impacts of colonialism. Colonialism in Somalia unlike in other parts of Africa did not penetrate deeply into pastoral society. Along the rivers it did transform production there and some riverine populations lost their land to Italian plantations and so on, but in terms of the political impact, the major impact was this creation for the first time of a central state and the creation of capital where the central state was controlled.<sup>34</sup>

In 1940, Italy joined the Axis powers and Somalia entered World War II with the United Kingdom and Italy battling with each other in Somalia. After the Italian defeat,<sup>35</sup> Somalia was placed under British military administration and remained so until 1949. The Italian police force was disbanded and replaced by Somalis under British officers and a police school was opened to train Somalis for higher ranks (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 331). Somali self-government was fostered by the British. In 1948 a portion of western British Somaliland was given to Ethiopia.

UN involvement in Somalia began long before 1992. At the end of World War II, the country was placed under a 10-year United Nations trusteeship in order to prepare for independence. This period from 1950 to 1960 is considered to be a time of prosperity and progress and is attributed to the effective control established by the UN trusteeship authorities.<sup>36</sup> Significant advances were made in education and irrigation. Farming was extended and wells were drilled for grazing. Plantation agriculture was revived for crops such as cotton, sugar and bananas. There was a step-by-step replacement of expatriates by Somalis in the civil service and police force. Party politics (heavily influenced by kinship) were introduced into municipal elections in 1954, and the first general election of a legislative assembly by universal male suffrage was held in 1956.

### *Independence*

On July 1, 1960, British Somaliland united with Italian Somaliland to form the independent Somali Republic. A multi-party constitutional democracy with its National Assembly of legislators was established but loyalty to kin and clan was still the predominant political force. Clan relations continued to be the key defining factor of Somali politics. "[P]olitical parties in Somalia degenerated into little more than fronts for clans and subclans and sub-subclans and eventually there were over a hundred political parties vying for office in Somalia with all of the not surprising problems of patronage and corruption that this could engender."<sup>37</sup> Kinship in Somalia determined how politics were done. In this game of brinkmanship, patronage and the numerical strength of clan coalitions were more important than personal merit (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 30). Although some Somalis remember this time as an era of political freedom, others see it as a time of increasing corruption, clanism and political gridlock.<sup>38</sup> In addition, the country became heavily dependent on foreign aid which only seemed to serve the bloated civil service and military,<sup>39</sup> while the rest of the country remained poverty stricken.

The Cold War enabled successive political regimes in Somalia to play the superpowers off against each other, generating large amounts of economic and military aid. Control of the state apparatus became a major source of wealth, and money was redistributed along clan lines through an elaborate patronage system. By 1969, there were 64 political parties in a population of four million, each representing one of the 64 important lineages and sub-lineages (Samatar 1991: 17). Thus an individual with

access to state coffers could ensure that his clan received a slice of the national cake. This pattern reappeared during the international relief effort in Somalia as clan members vied for positions on local councils in order to corner any foreign assistance which might be channelled through them.

### *The Barre Regime*

When MGen Siad Barre, commander in chief of the armed forces, seized power in 1969, he established a socialist military dictatorship which was to last many years.<sup>40</sup> This put an end to democratic government in Somalia. Siad Barre's government suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, disbanded political parties and banned professional associations. Leading civilian politicians were arrested and detained for years and civic organizations which were not sponsored by the new government were banned (Omaar 1992: 230-231). According to Rakiya Omaar, a Somali and executive director of the human rights organization Africa Watch: "An array of legislative provisions made it a capital offense to be a member of an opposition group or any organization the government considered unacceptable, including trade unions outside the government-controlled federation" (Omaar 1992: 231).

Barre acted as president, supported by the 25-member Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) of army and police officers. In 1972, the government introduced a new constitution which, although making provision for the National Assembly, allowed Barre's small circle to hold on to power. Siad Barre's government tried to create a political system without constitutional, legislative or judicial restraints on the exercise of executive power (Omaar 1992: 230-231). The system relied heavily on security agents and informants to stamp out dissent.

In the attempt to modernize the country, the Siad Barre government declared war on tribalism. The goal was to "transform overnight an underdeveloped, conservative, Islamic country, inhabited primarily by nomads, into a modern socialist state through 'scientific socialism'" (Omaar 1992: 231). Banks and insurance companies were nationalized, as well as most of the country's limited industries. Management of the economy fell to government agencies.

Private social gatherings, such as engagement, wedding and funeral ceremonies, other than those at government orientation centres, were forbidden in 1973 as part of this campaign to ban tribalism (Omaar 1992: 231).



Siad Barre continued to dismantle the institutions that allowed people to articulate grievances and that provided a framework for resolution of conflict (Omaar 1992: 232). Frustrated, many people left the country or turned to violence to bring about change.

The Somali Revolutionary Socialist party, which included civilians, replaced the SRC in 1976, but Barre and a small group of officers retained control over the government. Barre relied heavily on his Marehan clan and drew most of his ministers from there. He also established close links with two other clans: the Ogadeni, his mother's clan, which was the major clan grouping in the army; and the Dolbahante, the clan of one of his sons-in-law, Ahmed Suleiman, who at various times was head of national security services, interior minister and assistant secretary of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist party. Because Barre's inner circle of advisors came from only three clans, his government was at times scornfully referred to as the MOD (Marehan, Ogadeni, Dolbahante) (Makinda 1992: 26). The regime became increasingly repressive as a small alliance of clans came to control the state and used the coercive arms of the state to control the other clans (the Majeerteen in 1979, the Isaaq in 1988, the Hawiye in 1989-1990) (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 336).

[T]he only real economic opportunities in Somalia were within the state and this is important in the context of how Somalis were acting in the 1990s as we were proposing to help them rebuild the state.... The government itself, even at the local level, was seen as part of patronage politics, and so people would compete fiercely for jobs even at a relatively low level to try to monopolize those opportunities, but that wasn't the only role of the state as it grew in Somalia. The other experience that Somalis have with this contemporary state is that whatever clans got in power used the state as a tool to oppress the rest, monopolize not only economic opportunities but suppress other clans politically.<sup>41</sup>

Because Siad Barre supported "scientific socialism," the Soviet Union and its ally, East Germany, supported the Barre regime at first, providing training for the police and security forces (Omaar 1992: 231). In addition, the Soviet Union provided assistance during the 1974-75 drought. Then in 1974, when the Soviet Union switched its support to Ethiopia after a Marxist regime was established there, Somalia turned to the West for aid and military support.<sup>42</sup> "By the 1980s one hundred per cent of the development budget in Somalia was externally financed and fifty per cent of the recurring budget in the country was funded by foreigners."<sup>43</sup>

*Foreign Presence in Somalia*

There were four types of international players in Somalia: the superpowers (the United States and the Soviet Union); members of the European community (particularly Italy), regional actors (particularly from the Middle East) and, finally international organizations (UN and non-governmental organizations [NGOs] such as the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC]).<sup>44</sup> Until the mid-1970s, the Horn of Africa was an area of competition between the United States and the Soviet Union (and her ally Cuba)<sup>45</sup> who were pursuing their own global and regional ambitions in the Horn which had value because of its proximity to the oil-rich Middle East.

The turning point in super power alignments came in 1977 when the United States pulled out of Ethiopia, leaving a void to be filled by the Soviet Union. The Soviet decision to support Ethiopia during the Ogaden war angered Barre who threw out Soviet military advisors and closed down Soviet military facilities in the country. In 1979, after the Iranian revolution when the United States lost some of its tracking stations, it tried to increase its military presence in the Horn. This led to improved relations with Somalia, and in 1980 the United States took over the Soviet base at Berbera. The United States then negotiated agreements with Somalia, the Sudan and Kenya to allow U.S. Central Command, interested in ensuring the security of oil supplies in the Gulf, access to their military facilities (Makinda 1992: 64-65). The result of superpower rivalry in the Horn was that large quantities of arms were supplied to the various power groups in the region.<sup>46</sup>

Colonial rule had divided the Somalis into five entities — Italian Somalia in the south, British Somalia in the north, some Somali communities in Djibouti, a large number of communities in the Ogaden under the rule of Ethiopia, and another large group in northeastern Kenya. This separation of kinsmen was a source of some grievance. (The Somali flag contains a star with five points representing the five different states that Somalis found themselves divided into during colonialism.) Independence had brought together Italian and British Somalia but it was not satisfactory. Somali foreign policy at independence became obsessed with the return of Ogaden until it actually sparked a border war with Ethiopia.<sup>47</sup>

*Civil War*

After the 1978 defeat during the border war with Ethiopia,<sup>48</sup> the United States became Somalia's largest provider of economic and military aid (Omaar 1992: 231). In exchange, the United States used Somalia's strategic location to establish a base for its Cold War strategy in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. The United States established a military and naval facility at Berbera that was used to survey the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean (Omaar 1992: 231). Besides providing weapons, the United States held frequent consultations with the Somali regime<sup>49</sup> and even assisted Somalia in resisting an invasion by Ethiopia in 1982. However, the destruction inflicted on the country during the war with Ethiopia from 1977 to 1978 created bitter opposition to Barre.

Guerilla warfare soon spread across the country. By 1989, two new movements, the United Somali Congress (USC), from the central region with aid from the Hawiye clan, and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), supported by the Ogadeni in the south, declared war on the government. In an attempt to thwart these guerrillas, the army brutally attacked the rural civilians in these areas, burning villages, slaughtering livestock and destroying water reservoirs (Omaar 1992: 232). It is important to note that Siad Barre's repression had been primarily directed at clans. According to Omaar (1992: 232) this made ideological differences a luxury no one could afford and identification with one's clan a question of survival, both for the individual and the group.

Mogadishu and all of the south was at war during the last three months of 1990, as the attempt to oust Barre escalated. Fierce clashes occurred between members of the Darod clan, many of whom were armed by Barre, and the Hawiye clan.<sup>50</sup> Thousands of civilians in Mogadishu were killed, particularly Hawiye members. Then on January 19, 1991, USC forces under Gen Mohammed Farrah Aideed, a former soldier who had led a USC faction that was based in Ethiopia, entered Mogadishu forcing Barre to flee to his home town of Gedo. Three days later, without consulting the leaders of the other armed opposition groups, prominent members of a group of businessmen and intellectuals, known as the Manifesto Group,<sup>51</sup> formed a government. Mohammed Ali Mahdi, a wealthy hotelier, was installed by the group as interim president. This move angered the other opposition groups.

In the early months of 1991, there were attempts to reconcile the armed organizations and to unite the USC, split into factions headed by Mahdi and by Aideed both from the same Hawiye clan yet from different sub-clans. It is important to note that, although most westerners understood that Ali Mahdi and Aideed were from the Abgaal and Habar Gidir sub-clans, few understood that both sub-clans were further divided into lineages which did not support the faction leaders and that both leaders were in constant negotiation with other groups in order to maintain their precarious positions.<sup>52</sup>

Unfortunately, all efforts to reconcile the rival factions of the USC or to negotiate an agreement between the interim government and the other resistance movements failed. In such an attempt, the interim government convened the National Reconciliation Conference which occurred in two stages in Djibouti in June and July of 1991. This event was one of two central events (the other being the establishment of a separate republic in the north in May 1991, that shaped the emerging situation in Somalia. The conference endorsed the leadership of the interim government. In what has come to be known as the Djibouti Accords, the presidency of the interim government was given to the USC, which Mahdi interpreted as confirming his leadership. Aideed maintained that the USC should be allowed to nominate its own candidate, namely himself. Tensions between the two rival factions of the USC escalated into full scale warfare in Mogadishu<sup>53</sup> in November 1991 as Aideed's faction stepped up its effort to oust Mahdi. The central government was dissolved. Several clans then tried to assert their control over particular regions.

Clans battled for control of the country. Because of the collapse of the central government, local clan elders or heads of factions were the only entities capable of exercising leadership and administrative control. Depending on which faction was in control, the rules and goals of a region varied. The lack of good communication and transportation made it difficult for any of the regional leaders to set up an efficient government. The situation of existing leaders being under attack by rival groups made it even more difficult for anyone to exert effective control over any area. It is important to note the considerable regional and situational variation. As Menkhaus and Prendergast point out:

Evidence from around the country points to the fact that local politics are quite diverse, varying considerably from one locale to the next. The legitimacy and



effectiveness of particular social categories — elders, faction leaders, intellectuals, clerics, district council members, businessmen, militiamen, former civil servants, women's groups, local NGOs — are immune to sweeping generalizations. The fact is that their legitimacy as social and political leaders is fluid — it varies from one place to the next; it is prone to change over time; and it depends very much on the type of authority one is seeking. So, for example, while clan elders are almost always central players in clan reconciliation and conflict mediation, they may not be the most effective or appropriate actors for managing and overseeing a demobilization program. District councils...may not be strong enough to serve as local decision makers in the allocation of scarce resources, but may be an effective implementing body for decisions made by elders. And, though generally extortionate and disruptive, under certain conditions militias have proven to be forces for stability (Menkhaus and Prendergast 1995: 6).

This fluidity in leadership and authority did have its implications for the international forces since it was important to determine with whom one should deal.

Now my experience in talking with different officers and different national units that participated in UNITAF [Unified Task Force] and UNOSOM [United Nations Operation in Somalia] was that...they came to realize within weeks that the elders needed to be brought in to this and that's not to say the militias could be ignored, they needed to be consulted on things too, but there was a need to cast your net fairly broad and by issue.

Certain things required, for instance road blocks, really required an agreement with the militias; resolution of disputes required the participation of the elders, some other issue might require participation of the business community or clerics and so it went.

But when decisions were made and then there wasn't this evolution in thinking, missions just became dysfunctional, there was a disconnect between the forces and the local population.<sup>54</sup>

The armed clashes and other serious problems were primarily in the south. Out of this turmoil, Gen Aideed and Ali Mahdi emerged as the two most powerful leaders in the south, particularly in the Mogadishu area. Fighting centred over control of Mogadishu neighbourhoods which were heavily damaged by the end of 1991. Another area of competition was the

inter-riverine agricultural zone between Mogadishu, Kismayo and Bardhere. This area, mostly inhabited by unarmed farmers quickly became a famine zone. Agriculture had been disrupted by mid-1991 by armed conflict between the USC and the SPM. Crops, seeds, tractors and irrigation pumps were stolen (Omaar 1992: 230), villages destroyed and people displaced. Farmers began planting smaller areas and consuming their crops before they could be stolen. By March 1992, the International Committee of the Red Cross noted "horrific levels of 90 percent moderate and severe malnutrition" in the area surrounding Belet Huen and in the camps of displaced persons around Merca, south of Mogadishu (Quoted in Omaar 1992: 230).

Lawlessness and the destruction of infrastructure<sup>55</sup> inflicted in the civil war, along with droughts at about the same time, combined to create overwhelming problems for Somalis. For example, drought, along with vandalism of the well/reservoir system in Mogadishu had created a situation in which only a third of the population had safe water. Clan fighting and banditry prevented adequate distribution of food aid. Somalia fell into a state of "Mad Max" type anarchy, characterized by roving gangs of bandits and loosely organized clan militias all fighting for control of key towns and regions. An economy of plunder emerged since militias were unpaid and fought only in order to loot like the bandits were doing.

Most of these factions were based on clan identity and each of the clans purported to have control over certain zones of the country, but in fact that was misleading because the reality was virtually none of these factions had any day-to-day control over the streets and rural areas that they claimed to control. In fact, what happened is the country began to be gripped by what some people began to call "Mad Max" anarchy where roaming bands of militia men and bandits wandered the streets, looting, taking whatever they could, answering to no one whatsoever, in some ways transforming society particularly because these 15 year-olds with guns were not answering to elders either.

This meant that a whole economy of plunder developed in the country where you had large constituencies with vested interests in continued lawlessness. You had on the one hand you had the young men who had no training because the educational system had collapsed in Somalia ten years before there. That were more powerful in their community in the chaos as long as they had a gun.... They had made more money in the chaos looting and extorting than they had ever made before, and they had a strong interest in seeing this continue.

...There were entire Somalia clans who came in and conquered vast, very valuable real estate in Somalia and they had a continued vested interest in this whole economy of pillage.... What we began to see was this anarchy in Somalia and the economy of plunder was serving some people's interests quite effectively.<sup>56</sup>

In a desperate attempt to contain the famine, relief agencies were forced into extortion type "security" arrangements with the local militias, which demanded their cut of food relief and salaries to guard the international convoys and compounds.

As the famine worsened, international organizations...had to take pragmatic steps to get food to the starving population. That meant that they had to acquiesce to protection payments. They had to look the other way when a certain amount of food was diverted at the seaport by whatever clan controlled the seaport. They had to agree to pay very, very heavy sums to militia men to protect their compounds, to protect their vehicles, to protect the convoys.

That's how the word "technical" came to be used, in fact. We call the young men on these vehicles with large mounted guns on the back of pick-up trucks, we came to call them technicals. That was because the NGOs, to justify the expense of paying all this protection money, had them marked them down as technical advisors. So they were the technicals.

Over time what we found out was that in this pragmatic and understandable desire to get food to this huge population of innocent starving victims, the food itself had become the main item over which the war was being fought.<sup>57</sup>

Fighting soon centred over control of the lucrative traffic of famine relief supplies which were diverted in large amounts and resold by militias in neighbouring countries in order to finance arms purchases.<sup>58</sup> The international relief effort had now become part of the problem, fuelling the fighting and militarization which had caused the famine in the first place. This dilemma led the international community to consider armed intervention as a solution to the economy of extortion and to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to the victims of the famine.

THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA AT THE TIME OF UN INTERVENTION  
IN 1992

Because of the problems caused by fighting among the clans, and the drought, rural dwellers relocated to the cities. At the time of the arrival of the Canadian Forces (CF), over 600,000 people lived in cities with 350,000 in Mogadishu. The population in 1979 was about 3.5 million with up to an additional million living as refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya. There were about 700,000 refugees from Ethiopia swelling the population.

Official reports noted that the political–security situation in all parts of the country was uncertain and was likely to be subject to rapid change for some time. The conditions of political upheaval, combined with the effects of civil war and a severe drought had created havoc in Somalia. There was a breakdown in the social structure. Police services had fallen apart. These reports did not notice the traditional systems of law and of clan elders which were working in varying degrees in different parts of the country and continuing to mediate conflicts in the absence of formal state and judicial systems. It was these traditional institutions which had arisen to fill the vacuum left after the collapse of the Barre regime.<sup>59</sup> For example, in some communities neighbours maintained security through a neighbourhood watch system to stop thieving. Sometimes, young unarmed boys would be paid to keep watch and report anything suspicious. Other neighbourhoods made payments to local armed youths (who might otherwise be terrorizing them) to serve as a private security force in their area. According to Menkhaus and Prendergast (1995: 7):

Collectively this web of radically privatized, quasi-vigilante security arrangements provides reasonable deterrents to crime — for those who can afford them, and who hail from sub-clans with adequate power to reinforce the deterrent factor. Indeed, for those Somalis possessing valuable commercial property, especially vehicles, the best insurance against theft is the certainty that their own clansmen will exact revenge on any other clan which attempts to steal their property.

The Islamic courts also stepped in to fill the void left by the collapse of the judicial system. Fundamentalist mosques, with the support of well-armed and disciplined young men, were able to maintain the peace in some areas by imposing *sharia* law (Menkhaus and Prendergast 1995: 7).



Extreme poverty, shortages of food and a devastated economy were characteristic throughout most regions of Somalia, and were expected to contribute to an unstable political and human rights situation throughout at least 1992. Mass starvation was the most significant of these problems; it was estimated that more than half of the population was suffering from malnutrition. The distribution of food aid by the UN, which was to alleviate this problem, was itself impeded by the inter-clan fighting and banditry.

Although western media reduced the complexity of the war (in the 1990s) to that of clan conflict, the situation also involved a power struggle between two powerful men, Aideed and Ali Mahdi, as well as a conflict over resources such as food, by groups of heavily armed impoverished boys and men (Omaar 1992). The conflict between Aideed and Mahdi became, in part, a battle between two sub-clans. This was an anomalous situation for Somalia since there had been no history of fighting within the Hawiye clan, nor any tradition of fighting between Aideed's Habar Gidir sub-clan and Mahdi's Abgaal sub-clan. The rivalry resulted from the way Barre and then the two USC leaders attempted to manipulate clan loyalty in order to secure political power (Omaar 1992: 233). Thus, sub-clan loyalty became increasingly important. Money was also an issue in this conflict, that is, those who were able to show they were the legitimate or sovereign rulers were entitled to enormous and much needed amounts of aid. In addition, those in government controlled the exchange rate and could borrow, which permitted those in power to amass personal fortunes. Mahdi and his ministers lost their businesses and depended on holding office for income, and Aideed and his financial backers were counting on their share of the spoils if they won (Omaar 1992: 233).

The Mahdi camp insisted on UN peacekeeping forces, whereas Aideed feared international intervention because he feared that the UN was prepared to recognize the existing government. Aideed preferred a national reconciliation where he hoped that a new government, one in which his faction would play a more prominent role, would be installed (Omaar 1992: 234).

The UN and its agencies withdrew from Mogadishu after Barre was overthrown, even though civilians were being killed in that city. It provided no assistance in 1991 and made no effort to help when Mogadishu became a killing field in November 1991 (Omaar 1992: 233).

One of the criticisms that has been leveled at the United Nations, at the Organization of African Unity, at the Arab League, the Islamic Conference and a whole host of international agencies is that they did nothing in that pivotal first year of the Somali civil war when timely negotiations, intervention to produce some peace agreements might have averted the level of destruction we saw toward late '91 and early '92 when the famine began to take its toll. There are reasons, though, that I should add why no U.N. agencies were on the ground in Somalia in 1991 and until mid 1992. First, it was due to security risks. There were only a handful of NGOs that were willing to take the risk of working in that country. It was very, very dangerous.

Second, it did not have — most of its agencies did not mandate to deal in a war zone. Every organization and agency has specific mandates. The International Committee of the Red Cross has the specialized mandate of emergency relief to victims of war in active combat zones.

U.N. agencies don't. Most of them deal with development issues. Those development issues assume the cessation of hostilities and they also assume that there is an existing government through which the U.N. works.

The U.N. is a state-centered organization and the absence of a Somalia government was a third deterrent for the presence of the U.N. in 1991. They kept waiting for some government to be stood up in Somalia and had not expected that the continued anarchy would prevail there.<sup>60</sup>

In mid-December 1991, prompted by harsh criticism from the Red Cross and the United States State Department, the UN sent Under Secretary-General James Jonah to Somalia along with representatives of important regional organizations such as the OAU and the Arab League to negotiate a cease-fire. The poorly planned visit revealed the ignorance of the UN about the situation in Somalia.<sup>61</sup> The UN then placed an arms embargo on Somalia and member countries were urged to provide humanitarian aid. By mid-February 1992, the UN called negotiators for Mahdi and Aideed to New York and after only two days of negotiations, declared a cease-fire. The fighting in Mogadishu, however, continued. Later that month, representatives from the UN, OAU, Arab League and Organization of the Islamic Conference visited Mogadishu to work out the details of the cease-fire (Omaar 1992: 234). A UN force of 50 unarmed observers was authorized by the UN Security Council to help enforce a UN-brokered cease-fire in Mogadishu between Mahdi and Aideed. The

cease-fire was relatively effective at that time, but there was still banditry, looting and uncontrolled factions both in Mogadishu and throughout the country.

Food relief could not get through to the starving populations. The UN could not broker agreements with the many factions and militias that controlled small chunks of the territory between the seaport and the starving population in the interior to guarantee that the convoys would make their way through.<sup>62</sup> In addition, food was being diverted by militias controlling the seaport, airport and roads. Finally there was the problem of legitimate representation. It was impossible to make agreements with people who could actually enforce arrangements to protect humanitarian aid.<sup>63</sup> In spite of advice from local leaders (militias, elders, women's groups, etc.) stressing the need for intense preparations before national reconciliation could take place, the UN pushed forward rapidly.<sup>64</sup> By July 1992, the UN was envisaging a long-term role in Somalia over and above protection and guarantee of security for humanitarian relief. The UN began to talk about the need to help Somalis re-establish a functioning police force, enlarging the number of observers, etc.<sup>65</sup> A letter from the Secretary-General to the Security Council talks about difficulties in reaching accords with some of the major players and goes a long way to justify invoking Chapter VII of the UN Charter calling for peace enforcement, leading to the language in the Security Council resolution, to "take all necessary means" to protect humanitarian relief — the diplomatically stated justification for military intervention.

[T]his is one of first times that it has invoked — Chapter 7 peace enforcement is invoked for a conflict that is essentially within the internal affairs of a state as opposed to, say, the Gulf war which was more a conventional Chapter 7 collective security move against a state that had aggressed a third party.<sup>66</sup>

#### BELET HUEN

Belet Huen was a "frontier" area with two very distinct forms of production (pastoralism and agriculture).<sup>67</sup> Belet Huen was geographically significant since it was a strategic gateway between central Somalia, Ethiopia and southern Somalia. The country's only north-south highway ran from Mogadishu along the Shebelle River to Belet Huen. From there, the highway ran north to the central regions of Somalia and west into Ethiopia. According to Dr. Ken Menkhaus<sup>68</sup> Belet Huen was a critical

choke point for the traffic of arms from Ethiopia, and the movement of men from the Mudug region in central Somalia (where the now deceased Gen Aideed's Habar Gidir clan was based), to Mogadishu:

There was no other viable road, especially in rainy seasons, to use to get to Mogadishu. Why does that matter? It matters first because General Aydid's clan are concentrated to the north of Belet Weyne. They need access to that highway and through Belet Weyne to move their men and militia into Mogadishu, and that's going to be important and that's going to cause a certain level of political tension and bargaining in Belet Weyne. Secondly, many of the arms that were used in Somalia during the civil war were coming from Ethiopia. At the same time that the Somalia government collapsed, it was roughly at that same point that there was an overthrow of the Mengitsu regime in Ethiopia. The army, which was the largest in Africa, was disbanded and there were hundreds of thousands of soldiers who were selling their weapons. This became a major weapons market. The movement of guns and tanks and other weaponry were free coming in from Ethiopia to Somalia and many, if not all, of those weapons were moving through Belet Weyne. This, again, is important in terms of the context in which the intervention took place. This was an area and a city of considerable strategic importance in the Somalia political context.<sup>69</sup>

Belet Huen was thus an area of fierce political competition as local clans struggled to control this critical region. The Barre regime was pushed back toward Mogadishu by clan-based rebel militias in 1989-1990. The regime retaliated by practising a scorched earth policy, looting and assaulting local populations as it retreated. Belet Huen and surrounding areas along the Shebelle River were particularly hard hit by Barre's supporters, leaving the region vulnerable to famine and food shortages by mid-1991.

Most of the clans in and around Belet Huen happened to be from the Hawiye clan-family. The Haawaadle, a relatively small clan of the Hawiye clan-family, was the dominant social group in Belet Huen. This clan had a quasi-monopolistic control over town affairs.

They lived on the east bank of the city of Belet Weyne and they were able, because of their size and because of their political alliances...to virtually monopolize political and economic opportunities in Belet Weyne. They controlled the seat of the Governor, the Police Commissioner, they had the most individuals on the district council, they were able to garner most of the con-



tracts from international aid organizations and the UN which was the primary source of wealth during the intervention.<sup>70</sup>

A number of smaller Hawiye clans, including the Jajele, Galgaal and Badi Addo inhabit the west bank of the town. They were not particularly happy about the Hawaadle monopolizing opportunities in the town but unable to do much about it.<sup>71</sup> To the north of the town the powerful pastoral Habar Gidir clan (also member of the Hawiye clan-family) was dominant. They did not need to control Belet Huen directly but needed the acquiescence of whomever was controlling the town to allow the free flow of men and weapons through the town.<sup>72</sup>

The arrangement that was made during the Civil War in Somalia was that the Hawaadle could enjoy preponderance in Belet Weyne and were given by General Aideed...the right to control the airport in Mogadishu which was a very lucrative opportunity and one that a relatively small clan like the Hawaadle would normally not have had except for the fact that the Habr Gedr and Aydid needed their, again acquiescence. They weren't formal allies, the Hawaadle were very careful to stay as neutral as they could in the Civil War but they enjoyed special opportunities because of their geographic position.<sup>73</sup>

The Rahanwein, the agro-pastoral group from the region south of Belet Huen, flocked to the town during the 1991-92 famine, and were present in significant numbers as internally displaced persons in feeding centres.<sup>74</sup> They were the principal victims in the famine and constituted the bulk of the 200,000 or so famine victims who were flooding into Belet Huen as the Canadians were attempting to protect food relief to that area.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, there was a significant pocket of the minority "Bantu" farmers, known locally as Makanne, which lived along the Shabelle River. This group was considered to be socially inferior by the Haawaadle. They had lived along the river for centuries, we're not entirely sure of their origins, we think they were a pre-Somali group that has lived along the Shabelle River before the Somali nomads came in to the area many centuries ago. These are — this minority group in Somalia is a bit difficult to understand but very important because they were also among the principal victims of the war and famine. They are very powerless in Somalia society. Like the Dighil/Rahanweyn, they're low status in Somali society but much more so. The Somalis distinguish between themselves and these minority groups, these minority Bantu not by language - and the term Bantu is one that we've imposed on them, it's a linguistic term and in fact they don't speak

Bantu languages any more - the Somalis distinguish between themselves and these individuals by the type of hair. Somalis will call them hard hairs, timo jareer as opposed to soft hairs, the Somalis tend to have softer curls, timo jilaac and this is the key distinction made between them. That's important because they were also among the victims of the famine and Civil War in that area.<sup>76</sup>

The CARB's original destination in Somali had been in Bossasso in the northeast but this was changed in theatre and they were tasked to the Belet Huen region. In contrast to the northeast, which remained free of famine and most armed hostilities, the Belet Huen area was one of increasing tension. Refugees, militias and contraband were all flowing along the strategic highway to Mogadishu. As Said Barre's troops were pushed back to Mogadishu in 1990, his forces retaliated against the local population of Belet Huen by looting and raiding. Belet Heuen and the whole zone of the Shabelle River were subjected to this scorched earth policy.

By 1989 and 1990, the Hawiye clan had formed its own active militia against the Syad Barre regime as well and as they came back from this area retreating towards Mogadishu they wreaked havoc on Belet Weyne and all of the villages along the Shabelle River. That meant that zone was one of the first that we noted in our emergency needs assessments in 1991 to need assistance, one of the first areas where severe levels of malnutrition were being spotted.<sup>77</sup>

Famine victims from Rahanwein territory near Baidoa flocked to the town and an international relief operation was mounted in the town via airlift — the first by the International Red Cross and later in conjunction with the U.S. Operation Provide Relief. Refugees continued to pour into the town because there was water there and because the ICRC had set up a system of food relief.

Belet Weyne formed one corner of what became known as the Triangle of Death in Somalia, that extended through Mogadishu down to Kisimayu and then to the Town of Bardhere and Baidoa in southern Somalia. The town is home to an estimated 200,000 people at immediate risk of starvation. When the first phase of U.S. airlifts took place in September of '92. In that U.S. airlift the Operation Provide Relief what's significant here is Belet Weyne was chosen as the first site for airlifted food not because it was the place of greatest need, there were other places where famine was worse, but because it was deemed the safest of the cities in the Triangle of Death; safer for U.S. military planes to land than Mogadishu, than Kisimayu, than Baidoa or Bardhere.<sup>78</sup>

However, security incidents caused suspension of the airlift within weeks. The Haawaadle clan attempted to maintain control over relief supplies, political representation and economic assets of the region, much to the discontent of the other clans, who wanted control over the highway. This highway was a major conduit of manpower and military hardware from Ethiopia and the central regions of Somalia to Gen Aideed in Mogadishu, and competition over the control of it sparked clan warfare.

So in terms of security Belet Weyne in 1992 can be viewed as a permissive environment for UN peacekeeping forces relative to other parts of southern Somalia, relative to other parts of the Triangle of Death, but not permissive relative to the northeast of Somalia. There would be a clear difference in the operating conditions of Bosasso and Belet Weyne.<sup>79</sup>

The Belet Huen region was also known for its extortion and intricate clan rivalries. Banditry and extortion were much more common in Belet Huen than in Bosasso. International relief agencies had to exercise considerable diplomatic skills to navigate the clan tensions that affected every part of their operations. Belet Huen was considered one of the more challenging positions in southern Somalia for a UN military force.<sup>80</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the Airborne arrived in a physically challenging and highly charged, fluctuating political environment. We will see in the next chapter that soldiers did not feel they were prepared for this. Many felt they were not adequately equipped, briefed or trained. According to Dr. Menkhaus, the UN had very little information on Somalia to disseminate to foreign contingents.

The UN does not have information-gathering agencies, it has no functional equivalent of an intelligence agency or a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.... So the UN is very dependent on national governments to provide it with information. And this...was a real weakness in the case of Somalia because the UN officials were either beholden to national governments whose information could reflect their own interests or more generally had no information themselves to work off.... The UN had actually very little to pass on to member states who were going to contribute troops and usually the flow of information was the other way around.<sup>81</sup>

Nor was the Airborne adequately briefed on Somali culture, a cursory look at most of the leaflets or handbooks that were handed out to troops

confirms the fact that there simply wasn't enough to help them understand the situation that they were about to enter in Somalia.

Your Canadian handbook, for instance, has only, as I believe, three paragraphs at the very end on comportment with the local population which are highly defensive in nature. "Don't trust the Somalis, an ally one minute can become an enemy the next". If that's all I had to go on, stepping into Somalia, I'm sure that my comportment with the local population might be contaminated in a way. I found as a civilian that the best approach was quite the opposite, was that if you assumed trust and you assumed safety and you did walk out into local situations with your, either unarmed or with your arms, you know, in holster and acted normally with the population, acted as though you assumed they were friends they usually responded very favourably.<sup>82</sup>

In the above quote, Dr. Menkhaus is referring to the Somalia Handbook (DND 1992b: 21/21) which was distributed to the CARBG before its deployment. In the section "Dealing with the Locals," there are three parts that consist of perhaps six sentences in total. The Handbook told soldiers: "Some have proven to be very unpredictable even day to day; any locals with weapons must be considered as dangerous and potentially hostile on every encounter." The Handbook does not mention that, in fact, almost all Somali nomads carry weapons to protect their herds. "So if we were viewing any Somali with weapons as potentially dangerous and took a very defensive and hostile approach to that, we would have essentially been hostile toward any nomad out there because virtually all of them had weapons."<sup>83</sup>

The Somalia Handbook also projects an idea of the Somali as potential threat, danger and perhaps enemy: "Yesterday's allies can turn on non-vigilant groups if it is in their interest and if they can get away with it. This is an unfortunate aspect of trust building in Somalia." This simple statement in the Handbook does hint at the unpredictability of a peacekeeping environment but fails to capture the complexity of the situation.

I mean, that goes [with]out saying and yet in day-to-day life there were lots and lots of opportunities to forge bridges with Somalis. They weren't nearly as treacherous as these paragraphs seem to indicate.<sup>84</sup>

Our interviewees also saw the Somalis as dangerous and in addition they were led to believe that Somalis were somehow unclear, polluted. They were told not to touch them.



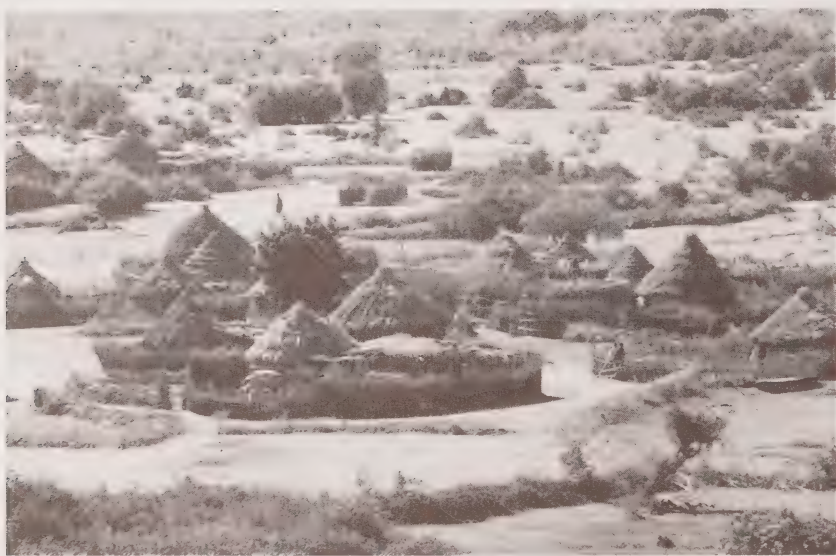
*You know Somali people are aggressive. The men are very, very aggressive. They have to be. It's a tough, tough environment. They constantly shake your hand. You know they will grab your hand and they'll look into your eyes. I know what that is. Is if I got his hand he can't hit me. I think it's pretty common in those type of cultures that they just want to be assured that you are not going to hurt them. They want to see your eyes. A lot of guys don't like that. We're from Ontario. For God sake don't touch us. So you might have seen soldiers react you know. What do you want? I mean Somali people are pretty affectionate too. But that's sort of a way of disarming the whole situation to see what your true intentions are. I think that bothered people. You didn't know where their hands had been or what they had done. So for young soldiers I'm sure it was. You don't look well buddy, you kind of look like you have jaundice. I'm not shaking your darn hand.*

*We were told to wear gloves if we were going to deal with them. Not because they were Black or anything else but because you don't know. You don't know what they have. There's so much disease because of the unhygienic conditions. There was no running water. They used to drink, swim and go to the bathroom and throw their dead animals in the river water. And our system just can't take the stuff that was in theirs. That was a big concern for everybody. Wear your gloves and watch what you touch.*

*I realized that it was their custom to touch and hold hands. I didn't like it but as long as they didn't touch me I didn't care. A lot of guys wore gloves, just so they wouldn't get TB [tuberculosis]. You see people with TB 'cause their skins all yellow — even though they're black — and they'd have scabs and sores all over their arms and legs. So you don't want to touch these people.*

Some of our interviewees realized that they were going through culture shock in Somalia. We will deal with this in detail in the next section.

*When the army, with its values transposed from the larger Canadian society, finds itself in a country with a totally different culture, there is conflict, a clash of cultures. In Somalia, for instance, the army went overseas with values based on the civilian society and this created incoherent situations for the soldiers. A soldier who sees inconsistencies between his culture and the Somali one, for example, coupled with a general rejection from those whom he came over to help, will be troubled and confused and he will then necessarily experience stress in his daily life.*



Rural Somali settlement

## *The Airborne in Somalia*

*But no one dies in the right place  
Or in the right hour  
And everyone dies sooner than his time  
And before he reaches home.*

Reza Baraheni

This section has to be considered as incomplete since the Commission's mandate was modified and it was no longer able to examine in-theatre events in detail. As a result, this section represents a fragmented and partial view of the play of events with an emphasis on one aspect of the deployment — stress. Although stress is difficult to measure we feel this will allow us to best describe the situation in Somalia from the soldier's point of view. Again, this an approach favoured by social constructionism.<sup>1</sup>

From the moment of their arrival in Somalia, Canadians were subjected to multiple sources of stress. According to Cockerham (1982), stress is thought to occur when individuals are faced with a situation for which their usual modes of behaviour are inadequate. Brenner's provocation hypothesis (see Cockerham 1982: 46) might also apply to Canadian peace makers in Somalia inasmuch as stress results from being dislocated from one's usual lifestyle. Research evidence (Wong et al. 1995: 3) suggests that high stress is associated with numerous negative outcomes which include higher accident levels, reduced productivity, poor decision making, and decreased immune system functioning. Participants in a Canadian Forces (CF) peace-keeping mission described operations as "stressful, frustrating and full of ambiguity." According to Pinch (1994a : 35) "the latter two are implicated in 'cumulative stress,' which is reported to be present in every peace operation; in unstable situations, there is also the virtual certainty of 'critical incidents' or abnormal occurrences that are associated with 'acute stress.'"

Because the U.S. Army had a number of sociologists and psychologists in the field with them in Somalia (Gifford et al. 1993, Ender 1995, Miller and Moskos 1995) we have access to a privileged source of scientific data on stress that U.S. soldiers were subjected to in Somalia and how they reacted to this stress. In addition, there have been a number of recent studies (Farley 1995, Pinch 1994a, Wenek 1993) on stress factors facing Canadian peacekeepers in deployments other than Somalia. No one stressor is responsible for low morale or decreased job performance. Rather, they work together to create a cumulative effect (see Farley 1995).

By focusing on stress, we are necessarily focusing on the negative, on everything that went wrong. That is not to say that we do not recognize the good. This is dealt with briefly in a later section of this chapter when we look at warrior versus humanitarian values among peace makers in Somalia. One is always left wondering how valuable it is to study what went wrong as opposed to studying what works and how to keep it working. In fact, studies of what went wrong somehow seem to go unheeded. In his book on the My Lai inquiry LGen Peers cites a series of factors that he and his staff considered to have contributed to the tragedy (Peers 1979: 229-237). Although it is not appropriate to compare My Lai to Somalia, Gen Peers' list sounds eerily like a checklist of all that went wrong in Somalia. Gen Peers' list included:

- lack of proper training ("neither units nor individual members had received proper training in the Law of War, the safeguarding of non-combatants, or the Rules of Engagement");
- attitudes toward the Vietnamese ("low regard for the local population," use of derogatory terms);
- permissive attitude;
- leadership ("commanders did not have control of the situation");
- psychological factors (apprehension, frustration, the "failure to do battle," alcohol and drugs);
- organizational problems;
- nature of the enemy ("it was difficult to distinguish combatants from noncombatants"); and
- plans and orders.

In the spring of 1972 M. Scott Peck was chairman of a committee of three psychiatrists appointed by the Army Surgeon General, at the request of the Chief of Staff of the Army, to make recommendations for research that might shed light on the psychological causes of My Lai. He concluded



that because of the chronic stress they were under, the individuals of Task Force Barker were more “psychologically immature, primitive, and brutish” than would be expected in a normal situation:

In a situation of prolonged discomfort we humans naturally, almost inevitably, tend to regress. Our psychological growth reverses itself; our maturity is forsaken. Quite rapidly we become more childish, more primitive. Discomfort is stress. What I am describing is a natural tendency of the human organism to regress in response to chronic stress. The life of a soldier in a combat zone is one of chronic stress [describing soldiers in Vietnam]....They were at the other end of the world from their homes. The food was poor, the insects thick, the heat enervating, the sleeping quarters uncomfortable. Then there was the danger, usually not as severe as in other wars, yet probably even more stressful in Vietnam because it was so unpredictable (Peck 1983: 220-221).

Will we ever learn from history? Who ever would have thought that lessons learned from an extreme war environment and U.S. troops run amuck would be useful to Canadian peace missions?

This chapter deals with operational and organizational factors causing stress. While this story begins before the Canadians left for Somalia, in the field, things like the physical organization of living quarters in the camp and the difficulty in communicating with home affected morale as did double standards in the enforcement of camp rules. The first section deals with the physical environment — things soldiers had no control over such as geography and climate. The subsequent section deals with psychological stress particularly the social and cultural interface with Somali citizens.

The next sections deal with reactions to Somali people and alienation. Essentially two reactions to Somalis can be discerned: that of humanitarian and that of warrior, the latter leading to a perception of the Somalis as “the enemy.” It may be that the events which occurred in Somalia in March 1993 were a result of the cultural predisposition of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) combat unit (the assumptions, perceptions, thoughts and feelings that were patterned by the military and particularly Airborne socialization); the organization of the unit into distinct and autonomous commandos each with its particular subculture; and by the situational contingencies that arose from the external environment (African climate, organization of the unit in theatre, nature of interactions with the local population).

## OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

*Preparation for Somalia*

According to Gen Boyle (April 20, 1995, meeting with Judge Advocate General, Ottawa) the CAR showed a lack of cohesion in its training to go to Somalia. The Airborne was also weak in mechanized operations having received wheeled and tracked vehicles only a month and a half before it left for the field. CAR members had to train themselves on a number of mechanized operations in order to go.

*The Airborne were light infantry. That is, their role was to jump out of airplanes and to arrive on the ground. In the mission for Somalia they all of a sudden were to be equipped with vehicles. So they had to do some training as to, first how to drive these vehicles, not all that difficult, but there are special ways of handling these vehicles so that you don't turn them over and kill yourself or those who are in the back. There are also special procedures to get in out of the vehicles, so that you don't get shot.*

Because of the lack of preparedness and what upper ranks felt were deficiencies in command, LCol Morneau was replaced as Commanding Officer (CO) by LCol Mathieu in late October 1992. So, in addition to having to adjust to downsizing, vehicles and the mission, soldiers had to adjust to a new commander.

*If you don't permit a considerable amount of time to let the Commanding Officer get the unit in shape, get the unit stabilized, trained, socialized and well-motivated, then you're really asking for trouble.*

Detailed sessions on the culture and complex politics of Somalia were not an integral part of Airborne training prior to deployment. As we saw in Chapter 5, handbooks covered Somali culture only superficially. This was probably due to the usual last minute scramble before the mission. According to Jockel (1994: 57): "Peacekeeping operations appear to be planned, appraised, analysed, guided, supported, governed as an ad hoc activity on each occasion they are mounted." But even if the information was gathered at the last minute, there was very little emphasis placed on intercultural training:

*We had about an hour briefing on cultural awareness. I received a little booklet with little phrases, information on the climate, etc.*

*We received very little cultural training before leaving for Somalia. Someone came and talked to us for about an hour. He had worked there for some other organization, and talked about the local culture. Later a group of Airborne people who had been to Somalia came and explained what the mission would be. I don't think that there was more than an hour of cultural training.*

*We had an overview. It lasted about one hour, and I was given a booklet. That's it.*

*The only briefing we had was that they were Muslim and that they had had a camp in '92, just general stuff, nothing about what the people are thinking. We knew nothing about them.*

*The cultural awareness training wasn't very detailed. There wasn't really much that was known. The person who came to talk to us from Somalia was from the north end. He has different ways of doing things. So it was not very accurate. We were never really told what it was like there. For example they told us to bring all our parts for our sleeping bag which is good for -40° or -50° below zero. They said bring it all, it might get cold at night. Well, if you call 25° or 30°C cold. So we never really got much of a cultural awareness of what Somalia would be like.*

Neither does there seem to have been any homogeneity to the information given to different groups. Each Commando was in charge of its own cultural training. Again, the atomized nature of the Airborne played itself out.

The Regiment laid on an overall list of items that the Commander wanted covered, and then each Commando broke it down and the training was up to them to go and prepare their different stands, and it was up to them to do how they wanted to train for this (Testimony of MWO Mills, BOI Vol. IV: 822).

As mentioned above, some brief sessions on Somali culture and politics were held, but the training was uneven and soldiers were left with very little idea as to what to expect in theatre.

*We didn't have a clue as to what to expect. Here, they tell you that it's hot there, but it's really hot there. We never had a film about Somalia to let us know how the people lived and ate. They could give us figures, but we needed someone to talk to us, someone who had been there, who could tell us the difference between a Somalian Muslim and an Arab Muslim.*

*It's like Mr. Smith goes to Africa, we didn't know what to expect. There was tension because of the war, of course, but it was totally different from what we were led to expect. We saw people who were hungry, yeah, but not hundreds of thousands of people dying.*

Soldiers spent the large part of their time in learning how to use their vehicles, and in practical manoeuvres, such as practising protecting a food convoy. Non-combat training, that is cultural training, took the form of briefings aimed primarily at officers who were free to disseminate whatever information they wanted to their men. The information received on Somali culture was deemed inadequate by almost all of my interviewees. This is a common complaint among soldiers on peace missions. In a study of U.S. peacekeepers, Miller (1995: 14) noted similar complaints.

Without understanding the larger context, soldiers have less information for interpreting local behaviour or making educated decisions when confronted with a novel situation. The request for increased cultural, historical and political information on the part of deployed military personnel was repeatedly heard on my visits to Somalia, Macedonia, and Haiti. Such information can be critical when soldiers are in a position to make judgement calls in the absence of specific instructions dictating an appropriate response (no such instructions could be made given the complex and changing circumstances of these missions). One enlisted man protested: "The higher command sometimes will keep info from soldiers that is important. They seem to forget that we are here. Just because we haven't been in the Army as long and haven't attained the rank, doesn't mean we aren't capable of understanding important issues." Because the perceptions and actions of the individual soldier have increased importance in ambiguous missions, there may be a new relevance for briefing even the most junior soldiers on the larger context in which they are expected to perform.

For Canadians getting ready for Somalia the media were the primary source of information. *I tried to keep up to date with current affairs. Particularly once I knew I was going. I would always listen carefully to news casts and read carefully articles about Somalia. That was the main source of information, the media. I never knew anything about the country before.* Interviews show that soldiers felt they had learned more from the Cable News Network (CNN) than from the briefings which they received from the military. However, the media gave the impression of "starving babies in Africa" and this did not coincide with reality. When the Canadian soldiers arrived in theatre, humanitarian assistance was already under way, and there were no longer starving masses for the soldiers to save.



*We got little handbooks for Somalia and they did have a few classes, but it wasn't as detailed as I thought it should have been. But then I didn't really know what to expect either when I got over there. Actually the media had painted a false picture by the time our group got over there. Because all the starvation was now down to a minimum. They had started big food convoys by the time we got there. To me it didn't seem like they were starving as much as they showed on the pictures.*

*Television gave us a pretty good indication of Somalia because nobody had actually been there before. A lot of the pictures they showed on TV were from a totally different area — some of the ones not even Somalia and it was six to eight months old, the film footage. So we got misguided information. It was totally different, what we were told and what we actually saw.*

Once in Somalia, some soldiers felt they were not able to benefit from the expertise of the local aid workers who could have advised them on the intricacies of the Somali culture. *We weren't associated with humanitarian aid organizations, we had no advisors, people who've been there for years and understand the situation. We should have been working with them. We had no experts, no expertise.*

There was also the question of changing orders (peacekeeping to peace making<sup>2</sup>), which occurred just before deployment, and the lack of confidence in the deployment itself. (The Airborne had put a lot of energy into the preparation for a mission to Western Sahara a year earlier only to have it cancelled at the last minute.) With the dates of departure and terms of engagement changing, people were not confident that they would actually go to Somalia.

*How did I come about to know I was going to Somalia? Well, we heard some rumours and things were going on and then it was announced we were going to be going on a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Now the units had been told the year previous that we were going to Western Sahara to do peacekeeping. We were basically on standby for almost a year. So a lot of people were saying: "Ya, sure. It won't happen. Just like the last time." So I think it was basically that mentality that you say we are going but we are not really going.*

*We thought that it was a great disappointment that Operation Python in the Western Sahara was cancelled. There was a constant fear that the Somalia mission, or Operation Cordon, as it was called then was going to be another*

*Operation Python. That meant that we would be training for nothing again. When they changed the mission in December people then thought: "They've cancelled Python, they've cancelled Cordon, we're never going to go anywhere."*

On a 2 Commando barracks wall, soldiers drew graffiti of an energizer bunny with the caption "We're still going" written underneath. Nevertheless, soldiers expressed the view that they were excited and full of anticipation before going. *We were really glad that we would be able to wear our maroon beret.<sup>3</sup> Morale was very high, so we were stoked, training now had a goal. We were going to leave the country, that's partly why we became soldiers in the first place. For many it would be their first mission to Africa.*

*We had been trained to do peacekeeping. And we ended up with a mission that was totally different. From night to day. I remember, the day the mission was cancelled. We had an announcement that day that it was cancelled. And everybody was dragging their chin on the ground. "What are we going to do now? We wanted to go." "Here's another letdown." Then the mission changed, and very quickly, we had to get ready, and we were gone. And of course, because of the change in focus, we never really had time to prepare ourselves — for the task at hand, or for what might happen. The only thing we were prepared for, I think, when we left, was that we were going to war. So the peacekeeping role was totally gone. But that was the nature of the mission. So, I don't think that we can learn a whole lot of things about how you prepare for peacekeeping, from Somalia, because it was two totally different things. Now, while we were there, we could have focused our thinking about — OK, lets go back into the peacekeeping role - let's do some in-house training. Maybe that could have helped.*

These expectations included not only the humanitarian desire to help starving Somalis but also the excitement or eagerness to experience combat. Some members of 2 Commando went out to have a beer to celebrate when the Rules of Engagement (ROE) changed from peacekeeping to peace making since this meant they would have an ever greater chance to test themselves.

*I think the men were glad when the mission changed from peacekeeping to peace making, because this was something that Canada hadn't been doing outside of peacekeeping. This was more real. We're training for war all our lives, and these guys all want to know what it is like. That's why they join the army, to soldier, not kill people but to go to conflicts and do*

*their jobs. Mind you after you've been in a war for a couple of wars, I guess you would rather not do it any more. It's like training to be a professor all your life and never getting a chance to teach.*

For other soldiers this only increased their anxiety.

*I think we were prepared to go and do a peacekeeping mission. Which is basically bringing convoys of food and protection, humanitarian aid, etc. So that was what we were geared for. That's what people were getting themselves ready for. And then December came. Our mission was cancelled and we were given a new mission and the focus was totally changed. I think there was much more anxiety then, because nobody knew if we would come back alive. We were going in a war zone. We had switched gears from keeping the peace, helping people, to going and sorting people out and basically going to war with whoever the enemy was.*

*It was a big shock when the mission was changed. There was a lot of anxiety that the mission might be cancelled. There was a lot of anxiety that we were unprepared for the new mission. The reconnaissance party had not gone there. We didn't have the right equipment defensively. It was supposed to be calm and now we were going perhaps into chaos. We didn't know what town we would go to. So there was an unknown component. A lot of people were angry. People that had Python cancelled, they'd invested emotionally somehow and then Cordon had been cancelled. They felt cheated somehow. Some people were worried that we were going into a more dangerous position.*

*Some people were scared. It was hard to tell if it was a situation we were going to be able to take hold of and control and maybe settle things down a bit. We saw people going around with those jeeps and the heavy weapons mounted on them. A lot of beatings, a lot of beatings with sticks. It was scary as far as what was going to happen when we got there. We weren't sure how we were going to be received. How things were going to go down.*

According to Lewis (1985: 44) a soldier's "manhood can only finally be verified in combat." Airborne soldiers can verify their bravery to some extent through the jumping out of airplanes. Nevertheless, the basic rite of passage for a unit such as the Airborne is combat. Lewis (1985: 54) refers to this as "praying for war." "This process of substituting a military cosmos glorifying the taking of life for a civilian one of revering it. .is one that has

far reaching implications for the initiate" (Lewis 1985: 54). According to Enloe (1983: 13), being a soldier means experiencing "combat and only in combat lies the ultimate test of a man's masculinity." The fact that the mission in Somalia was peace making and not peacekeeping meant, that for a large number of young men, this would be not only their first experience in Africa but their first experience where combat would most likely occur. Finally, they would succeed in doing what they were trained for.

The myth of combat dies hard in today's highly technological societies, there is still the widespread presumption that a man is unproved in his manhood until he has engaged in collective, violent physical struggle against someone categorized as "the enemy" i.e. combat. For men to experience combat is supposed to be the chance to assert their control their capacity for domination conquest even to gain immortality (Enloe 1993: 13).

Since the majority of the soldiers in the Airborne had not been on a peace mission before Somalia, they had no real, concrete notions of what it would be like. Their minds were full of various ideas of their future activity, some coloured with vague ideas of being a humanitarian hero, some coloured by expectations of combat.

I know what peacekeeping is. This (was) peacemaking. We came here with the assumption that some guys might be shot at; some guys might be killed; you might have to shoot someone. Well, how can you not have troops willing to accept this in their head if you don't have the type of training that puts this in their head. I mean, you can't have an army and not have a group of individuals who are kind of gung ho (Testimony of Pte Grant BOI: 864-889).

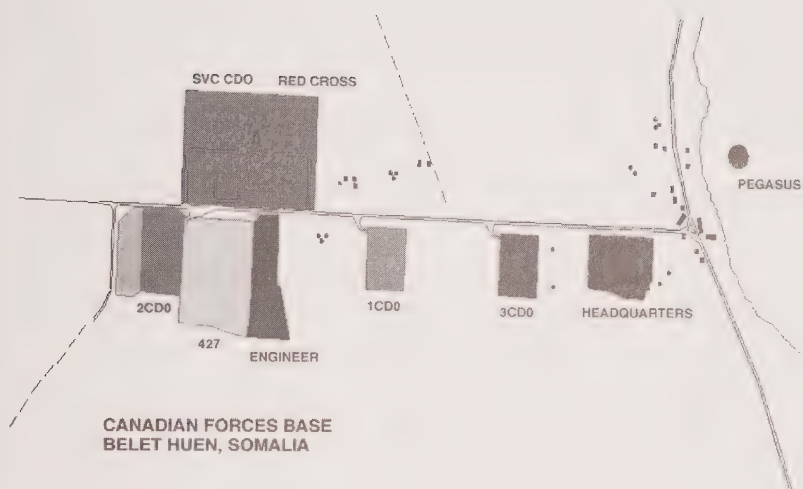
*The fact that it was peace making and not peacekeeping played a large role in what happened I think. The Airborne went in to expect the worst.*

*The biggest factor perhaps was the uncertainty as to what the Airborne would face. Was there going to be a lot of resistance, or was it going to be a cake walk?*

With the last minute change in mission, equipment arrived not quite ready to go.

*When the vehicles left, the Airborne were going on a peacekeeping mission, so they did what is called an administrative move which is the most*





Canadian Airborne camp, Belet Huen

*economical way of doing things. They pack up the stuff and when they get there they get out and assemble it in the order you want. When the mission changed to peace making and the possibility would be that they would face resistance, they should have gone to a tactical move. Which is, now you deploy the men with the vehicles, with the weapons ready. You know when the door opens the vehicles and the weapons are together and ready to go. Whereas in an administrative move, the door opens and all you've got is a vehicle, so you have to get a supply technician to get it off the ship. The men have come by airplane and then you have to marry the men and the equipment, and at that point you are quite vulnerable to attack, so that's the difference. This was probably of more concern to the leadership than the actual change of location itself.*

Some of the soldiers we interviewed raised the question about the suitability of some equipment. For example, they felt that they would have been better equipped with riot gear, rubber bullets, etc. to deal with crowds. *First of all, we didn't have the right equipment, in terms of crowd control, anti-riot gear, shields, tear gas, stuff like that.* When all a soldier has is his gun, when warning shots fired into the air are ignored, the next step becomes firing at a person. Canadian soldiers dealt with this difficulty by introducing shot guns which sprayed a crowd enough to deter it without causing serious injury. Soldiers also felt that patrol dogs would have reduced theft considerably.

### *The Camp*

The CARBG had originally trained and planned to work in Bossasso, a port city in northern Somalia. However, four days after arriving in Somalia in December 1992, the Canadian commander, Colonel Labbé, in discussions with U.S. military planners, had determined that the Canadian contingent would be responsible for maintaining security in the Belet Huen Humanitarian Relief Sector, 350 kilometres from Mogadishu. The CARBG base camp was set up astride the Mogadishu/Belet Huen highway. The requirements for the camp were significantly different than what had been prepared for in Bossasso. Because of the distance from Mogadishu, supplies had to be stored and guarded at the base camp which now found itself short of wire, sand bags and timber since only enough for one large triangular base camp had been brought from Canada. The Canadian compound, with its scattered layout, became more of a target for infiltrators and thieves, and security put extra tasking on manpower which

was already in short supply because of the change in mission. Soldiers such as Trooper Hodgson testified at the Board of Inquiry that their technical training did not prepare them for what they had to do in Belet Huen.

I believe the training we did for OP DELIVERANCE...wasn't wrong...just not adequate. We did a lot of crowd control and a lot of setting up feeding stations and so forth like that. When we actually arrived in Somalia we didn't do any of that. We did a lot of urban patrolling and a lot of dealing with the public, a lot of dealing with the police force and so forth like that and we didn't do any of that before we left (Testimony of Pte Hodgson BOI: 1091)

Other interviewees echoed his thoughts.

*All the training that was done prior to the deployment never prepared me for things I might have to do. Things I might have to see. Things I will have to get used to down there. Never.*

*When we got there nothing was set up. Everything was still falling apart. So I don't think there was any way we could have been prepared.*

The Belet Huen Humanitarian Relief Sector was divided into four security zones, each one assigned to a sub-unit of the CARBG. Zone Two was based in the town of Belet Huen and was the responsibility of 2 Commando and reinforced by a Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) Mortar Platoon employed in an infantry role. The southwestern Zone One, and the southeastern Zone Three, were separated by the Shebelle River and were the responsibility of the two mechanized commandos, 1 Commando and 3 Commando respectively. The northeastern zone, Zone Four, was considered the most complex with the Ethiopian border, two hostile Somali factions facing each other, and an exposed flank to the still unstable central regions of Somalia. This zone was the responsibility of A Squadron of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, which operated out of the town of Matabaan, approximately 80 kilometres northeast of Belet Huen.

The direct fire support and reconnaissance platoons were located with the CAR Headquarters and conducted both local security and convoy escort operations. In Headquarters Commando there were only two military police<sup>4</sup> *who spent most of their time guarding the CO*. MiWO Ferguson told the inquiry that police presence on the mission was sacrificed when the planned Airborne contingent was reduced. Only two mili-

tary police were planned for under Operation Cordon and this was not changed when the mission was escalated to Operation Deliverance. Neither was there a cell in HQ Commando devoted to civil-military relations, an unusual omission.

When the Commandos arrived in Somalia they reproduced their separateness. Each Commando with its own camp strung out along the road with its own medics, its own "weight room," its own recreation areas, its own region to patrol. In essence there were five separate camps (seven if you include the Dragoons and the platoon stationed at the air strip) and there was little interaction between them.

*The compounds were all in different places. 3 Commando had an area of responsibility of their own. 1 Commando had another one which was on the other side of our zone. 2 Commando was supposed to look after the town. And that was not the prize place because it was very hot. To do foot patrols, at two o'clock in the afternoon in 45°C is not exciting. 2 Commando didn't get to see much of the country, while the others got to travel all over the place. There was never any call to do any joint thing, so it just never happened.*

*There was no interaction between the Commandos except for sports day. None of the camps were actually together. When we left Canada, they were talking about getting triangular camps set up, where they would have everybody within this camp, but once we got over there everything changed. It wasn't one big group. It was like segregation. So there was no interest to find out what was going on in somebody else's camp.*

*The camp was set up in such a way that there wasn't a lot of intermingling. Airbornes kept to themselves. Air force squadron stuck to themselves. So the camp layout contributed to the lack of interaction between them.*

The logic to this escaped my informants who felt that it was militarily very unsound and dangerous to be so dispersed, near a road where there could be drive-by shootings and having the only means of extraction (the airfield) far away, across a bridge. Kyle Brown (Worthington and Brown 1997: 89) writes: "Why was 95 percent of the force put at a distance from the most important element in its life - its supply line and exit? If a hostile force blew up the bridge and isolated the platoon at the airfield, the Airborne Regiment would be cut off." Some informants felt that the only





Protection against the dust

reason for the set up was so Service Commando could set up on concrete platforms and use the remaining structures in place, and so Headquarters could be on a concrete base up on a breezy hill.

*I didn't believe in the whole set-up anyway. I thought it was ridiculous myself. Originally we had practised with one big compound like a triangle. And they had each Commando in a corner putting Service and Headquarters Commando in the middle. I thought that would have been a better set-up.*

*I was really worried that some technicals<sup>5</sup> could drive by and shoot into our camp.*

There was even a danger of shooting into each other's camp by accident, if for example, there was a shootout and the belligerents were between the Commando camps.

*And just the way the CO set up his camp. You usually protect your headquarters. You don't put your headquarters in the forefront. And you certainly don't set up a camp where you shoot each other.*

*It was totally ludicrous to have the camps positioned like that. If an infiltrator came in, there would have been crossfire and we would have killed each other. It was brain dead. Everybody knew it.*

*If you have a camp here, here and here, and the Somalis walked in and started shooting, then we'd end up shooting at each other, which is exactly what happened. We're lined up along the road, these guys shooting at somebody in the middle and the bullets would come into the other camps. It was absolutely ridiculous.*

The living conditions were like bivouacs. This was probably due to the organizational culture of the Airborne itself, which was oriented to rapid intervention as opposed to a prolonged stay in theatre. The lack of preparedness for a long stay meant that boredom could easily set in. Bivouacking was not necessary. The Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCDs) who were stationed several kilometres away managed to set up a relatively comfortable living situation which included scrounged furniture, a large TV screen and VCR, and even a mini putt. It is also interesting to note that the Dragoons had little difficulty with theft since they set up their

camp as a series of rings with the equipment in the inner circle, while the Airborne camps were strung out along a road.

*The RCDs made themselves a very large compound. So to get in anywhere you would actually have to travel quite a ways to get in except for the garbage bins which were right at the barb wire fence. They would sneak in there and grab a few things that hadn't burnt and then leave. The RCDs were such a small group and self-contained that everything was in the centre. In eye view of everybody. They had cleared all the brush out and everything. You could see for quite a ways. Other than that, they only hired one person to come in and burn the garbage. Other than that, they kept everybody else out.*

*There was an obvious difference between the Airborne camp and the RCDs' camp. The RCDs believe anyone can be uncomfortable, if they want to be uncomfortable. They had sofas and chairs brought into their lounge. Where they got them in the middle of Africa I have no idea. They had a big screen TV sent in. They used a satellite dish. Then, they used a VCR because the satellite dish had been outlawed. They had a beautiful canteen set up and like a bar area. You were allowed your two beer a day. It was just a nice place to go. Whereas the Airborne had nothing. The Airborne had two sections of canvas on the end of the kitchen. But there was nowhere to sit down except on folding chairs. It was just a totally different camp set-up. The Airborne is used to setting bivouacs up, short camps for 24 to 48 hours. We lived six months in a bivouac, whereas the RCDs set up a semi-permanent camp. So living conditions were extremely, extremely difficult.*

*In a way the Airborne are an elite. They train to do certain things, to come in do the job and then leave. They're there as a quick reaction force. They're just not trained well enough to do the long term. The Airborne camp was more like a bivouac. The RCDs made their camp as comfortable as possible. They had a canteen and had their video there. A senior NCO [non-commissioned officer] went as far as making a mini putt course out back. Oh ya. It was very relaxed.*

There was crowding and lack of privacy in the Commando camps although this was mediated by the fact that not all soldiers were in camp at all times. Privacy in one sense is merely an absence of crowding, but as a psychological concept it is more than this. Privacy implies definite allocations of space for exclusive personal and private use with secure bound-

aries and territorial rights. Although each Commando was able to establish a clear territory this does not seem to have been the case for the individual soldier apart from a small area around his bunk. Pinch's (1994a: 112) study of CF peacekeepers states that an issue considered central to morale and well-being for soldiers involves accommodation and related arrangements in the field. It is also interesting to note that in 1 Commando, NCOs were bunked in with their men "in order to keep an eye on them" while in 2 Commando, the NCOs had their own tent away from the men. As in Petawawa, the lower ranks of 2 Commando were together.

### *Rules and Regulations*

While the Law of Armed Conflict would allow a soldier to use deadly force to protect military property from a hostile combatant, it is silent on the use of deadly force when a non-combatant is stealing military property. In this case, the ROE would spell out what actions are to be taken. Although the ROE and their development for use in Somalia are much too complex an issue to go into here, the question remains, were CAR soldiers adequately trained in the ROE? Some soldiers told me that they never even saw the ROE card. *I heard about those cards for the Rules of Engagement, but I never got one or even saw one myself.* Trooper Grant gave very telling testimony on the ROE to the Board of Inquiry (BOI: 865-867).

It changed 10,000 times, nobody ever knew what was going on. We were told one thing, then the next week it changed to another thing, next week it would be changed again. When we arrived on the ground in Baledogle, we couldn't take weapons if we seen them, we just reported them to higher. If the weapon was pointed at us in an aggressive move, like to shoot or whatever, then we'd [aim for the] centre of mass [and] take him out. No questions there. If, like we had a perimeter set up there and if someone was stealing something from us, a warning shot in centre of mass, but if somebody was running away from our perimeter with nothing, then we don't shoot him.... Basically, if someone has a weapon and he is pointing it in a hostile act towards any member of the Canadian contingent here, the person is dead. If someone breaks into our wire, TDM [temporary depot for munitions], whatever, and is stealing something, weapons, ammunition, whatever, he's dead. If someone is running away from our wire and doesn't have anything, fine. If someone downtown is just swinging around a knife, well it's equal force. I mean if someone throws a rock at you you're not going to turn around and blast him with an M72. I mean it's escalation of force. That's basically it...



It's the individual's call, sir. I mean, every individual even in my own section, every individual has their own...you know like set down in their head probably before hand or whatever, that, okay if someone is stealing something, how do I know if he's got a gun, how do I know if he's got a belt of ammo, how do I know he's just got a bottle of water or a piece of a ration? You know and if you're looking through night vision, the goggles again, you know...you don't know, you've got to have to make that call.

Although soldiers may be fully informed as to ROE, it is essential to bridge the gap between the world of regulations and the soldier's realities (Wyatt and Gal 1990: 15).

*The thing to remember in discussing the Rules of Engagement is that there is an academic view, the Ottawa view of Rules of Engagement, which are things that you think and all that. But when you look at the soldier, the private at the bottom of the food chain, that is faced with those situations, it has to be very simple and very clear.*

This was highlighted by the American Capt Karen Fair, who is a judge advocate — a military lawyer who is brought directly into the operational planning and decision-making process in military operations. While working with the U.S. troops in Somalia, she relied on the use of scenario-driven training which “aided the soldiers in their repeated demonstration of sound judgment during split second decisions” (Fair 1995: 31).

The use of hypothetical scenarios had to be developed and used in order to actually teach ROEs.... Soldiers would be confused and would not understand their role if the ROE card was merely handed to them and read to them...ROEs without these training hypothetical were practically useless (Fair 1995: 13).

Fair (1995: 19) states that the U.S. military ensured that ROE training was being continuously conducted in theatre and that the commander of each unit was present during training.<sup>6</sup> She describes just how difficult ROE training was and how “creativity was necessary to ensure soldiers had an alternative to the use of deadly force in every situation” (Fair 1995: 30). In fact, the U.S. troops in Somalia eventually introduced the use of cayenne pepper spray that incapacitated at the end of February 1993. The Belgian troops handled things a little differently. When action called for an exchange of fire, they used a sniper squad so as not to cause unnecessary injuries (Auditorat général, Belgique 1993: 27). They also used riot

control gear such as tear gas. Canadians too tried to improvise around the use of deadly force and began carrying shotguns to reduce the risk of fatal injuries.

Yet, in spite of Capt Fair's diligent work, problems still arose among U.S. forces in Somalia. Gifford et al. (1995: 7) who did a study for the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army to assess soldiers' coping and adaptation to the stresses of Operation Restore Hope wrote:

The ROEs added to the frustration of many soldiers, despite command efforts to ensure that every soldier was informed as to the ROE (e.g. wide distribution of pocket cards stating and interpreting the ROE). Some soldiers simply disagreed with the ROE, feeling that they were too restrictive. More commonly, soldiers whose missions required close contact with the Somalis were, despite having read the ROE, uncertain as to what they could do in certain situations.

Similarly, Miller and Moskos (1995: 622) noted that "interpreting the rules of engagement was a most contentious issue for soldiers subject to acts of hostility." While Wyatt and Gal (1990: 14) raise serious questions about the ability of soldiers to determine what is legitimate, "even in democracies posited upon the assumptions that individuals are best able to reflect upon and represent their own true interests." Furthermore, because civilized military training incorporates into its standards the notion that it is permissible to kill certain people but not others, feelings of ambivalence are likely to result among combat troops when faced with their ROE. This ambivalence may create an environment within which concepts of morality and legality become abstract, subject to varying situational definitions.<sup>7</sup> Many of our interviewees felt that the ROE were shifting and unclear.

*Sometimes, there would be changes in the Rules of Engagement. I don't think the Airborne were changing it. They were coming from a higher authority. It gets confusing. At first, you get Rules of Engagement saying that if the guy breeches the wire just shoot to maim. That's not bad. Then a week later they say to shoot the knee bone and then a week later they say no between the knees and the foot. So you say what is it this week. I can't remember. Like say you get called to stand to at 3 in the morning. You just woke up. You're disoriented. You run out. So your adrenaline's pumping. Your pupils are dilated as far as they can go. You're sucking in every little bit of light to see what's going on. You don't have time to say week number one it was between the hips, two it was this, three it was that,*

*you just don't know. You just want to take care of yourself. It was very confusing and I think that was probably bad for morale.*

*We did get information on the Rules of Engagement verbally. And basically the Rules of Engagement are that if you feel threatened in anyway, it's OK to waste a guy. And the Rules changed every day. At one point they said that we could only shoot between the skirt and the ankle. But the legs are only this big around. As if we're going to hit that — while the guy's running. You can shoot 'em if they're doing this. You can't shoot 'em if they're doing that. Everyday the rules changed. And I never did get one of these cards I've been hearing about.*

*We had far too many ambiguous orders given to us and every day things would be changing. It's like playing telephone when you were a kid. By the time you get to the bottom, the message changes. Orders changed daily, so if you missed a day, you didn't know where you were. Shoot in the air, shoot in the ground. Shoot wherever. Don't shoot. That was a problem.*

*The orders about using force on somebody weren't clear. They'd say tomorrow that we're going to change the orders so that you can shoot below the waist, and Saturday there's going to be a big parade where the commanding officer is going to explain it to us. And then tomorrow they wouldn't change the orders. And Saturday there wasn't a parade. And people were shooting. And we didn't quite know if we were justified.*

According to Britt (1995: 2), peace operations where the rules for a mission and for what is required of the soldier are unclear or conflicting result in lower degrees of responsibility, commitment and morale. When individuals are not responsible for their performance, feelings of indifference and disconnection arise. "One major threat to superior performance during peacekeeping operations is reduced feelings of personal responsibility...the nature of peacekeeping operations can predispose soldiers not to take responsibility for their performance" (Britt 1995: 4).

The lack of control soldiers feel during peacekeeping operations may represent one of the most potent threats to feelings of responsibility and commitment. One of the hardest things for soldiers during certain types of peacekeeping operations is to have to stand by and witness horrific acts committed against members of a local population. Soldiers must also put up with being taunted and humiliated without being able to respond. Rules of engagement that are

overly restrictive can serve to make the soldier feel “out of control” thereby decreasing the soldier’s belief in his or her efficacy to perform even the most basic behaviours. When soldiers do not feel they have control over their actions, they will not feel responsible for or committed to what they are doing (Britt 1995: 16).

Britt goes on to say that one of the most frustrating experiences for a soldier on a peace operation may be a belief that the rules are unclear, that he has not had the proper training to do the job, and he has no feeling of control, yet the soldiers think that their unit leaders believe the soldiers clearly understand the mission, are properly trained and have control over their job (Britt 1995: 26). In Farley’s (1995: iv) study of stress in CF peace operations he noted that “the relationship between stressors and strain may be exacerbated by work roles that are unclear, unmanageable or conflicting.”

Cohesiveness is likely to be enhanced in units that have a clearly defined mission statement and provide explicit expectations with respect to the Rules of Engagement and new rules and regulations as these evolve over time.... Actions may be taken to “streamline” the dissemination of information through the chain of command (Farley 1995: v).

In fact, the role of leaders is crucial in a military operation. Poor leadership has been blamed for much of what went wrong in Somalia. “Significant others” (especially authority figures such as commanding officers, chaplains and physicians) confirm by their attitudes and assumptions the reality of military ethos. “Some of the mechanisms that leaders use to communicate their assumptions are conscious, deliberate actions; others are unconscious and may be unintended” (Schein 1985: 223).

In Somalia, when officers crossed a line — of allowable drinking for example — it may have sent a message to the troops that excess is possible and rules can be broken.

*There was very little to do. Like I said the drinking was way out of proportion there.... Each Commando ran their thing. So that rules were enforced whichever way the powers to be wanted them enforced.... Officers would say “make sure you take your two beers” but things fell through the cracks. If the soldiers see an officer drunk, what kind of example is that when a soldier sees that? Well, if the soldier likes to drink himself, then, well, if the officer does it, why can’t I?*



*How could he expect us to respect him when he ordered us to have two beers per day and he walks by with a six pack under his arm?*

When leaders give out double messages such as “do as I say and not as I do” or if there are double standards it can encourage a breakdown in respect for authority. In Farley’s (1995: iii) study of stress in CF peace operations he noted that the stressor item with the highest mean score was “a double standard among ranks when it comes to applying the rules.” Another CF study (DND 1995b: 18) noted that “Some Sr NCMs and Jr Officers generally believe that high ranking officers have enjoyed special benefits and privileges which are normally not granted to lower ranking members.”

Improper behaviour by those in an authority position can set an example which resonates through the entire group.

*There is a problem with the idea of a warrior class, saying: “We can do what we want to.” We can go out commit illegal or anti-social acts, because we belong to the warrior cult. We can do anything because we are different. This attitude can be transmitted by example by senior leaders. It doesn’t have to be directed. They can simply do things and the soldiers will infer that it must be okay because the general, colonel or major is doing it. That is why positive role modelling is so important in the military.*

In describing the appropriate screening of Canadian peacekeepers for UN deployments the consequences of poor leadership were described.

One of the responsibilities of leadership is to establish appropriate models of behaviour and reinforce appropriate group norms. Failure in this responsibility might lead to members failing to adopt appropriate group norms, or allow the formation of sub-groups within the unit that may not be supportive of the legitimate goals of the unit. If unit members adopt group norms which are contrary to unit or organizational norms, discipline and performance are likely to be compromised (Grandmaison and Cotton 1993: 8).

Another example is when a person engages in undisciplined behaviour and is not sent home, tacitly encouraging this behaviour — even if only by making it clear that such behaviour will not be punished.

*Leadership at all levels was weak and non-directed. And what I mean by that is when you're in an environment such as Somalia where everything is so out of your everyday experience, no matter how much training you have there has to be an expert somewhere, someone you can refer back to. We didn't get it right from the very, very top from what I understand. From NDHQ level down. What are we doing, what direction are we going? And then I believe that LCol Mathieu did the best with what he had. I think he's a bit of a cowboy, that's I guess his style. And then as it sort of filtered down. Yes we did need firm guidelines for direction. "No, you can not do that," instead of letting things just get pushed under the carpet. I think it resulted in conduct not being consistent. As a unit we weren't performing consistently. Does that make sense? The guidelines were not there, and the leadership wasn't strong enough. The leadership was weak because it didn't set guidelines; it didn't control from the top. Nor were rules applied consistently. I see that now that we're home. At the time, rules were applied consistently within a section and that was it.*

The importance attached to alcohol for the masculine identity of the Airborne is significant and it would seem that excessive alcohol consumption was a problem in Somalia. In fact, each Commando seemed to have its own version of the "two beers per day per man" policy. Some, including officers, consumed more than the allowed two beers per day and soldiers smuggled hard liquor back into camp with them when they returned from leave in Nairobi.

*About 85 percent of what went on there had to do with booze. There wasn't supposed to be any hard liquor there but there was.... Soldiers are soldiers. But again I think it's important to put things in context. I definitely did not agree with the drinking.*

*What went on at night was totally different than what went on during the day. Of course, drinking was allowed more openly then. Nights are nights. A lot of people seem to party more at night than during the day. The temperature was cooler as well. People were more apt to do things at night.*

In a survey conducted among U.S. troops in Somalia, "soldiers felt that the absence of alcohol (also a condition of Operation Desert Shield/Storm) contributed to the overall good discipline of the American soldiers in Somalia" (Miller and Moskos 1995: 620). When I asked a senior official at the Pentagon how "dry" missions came about, the answer

was: *Easy, we looked at the military police reports. There was a significant decline in incidents in Desert Storm [an alcohol free mission] so we put two and two together.*

Linsky et al. (1995), who did a major study of violence in North America, noted a clear correlation between alcohol consumption and violence. They (1995:112) go on to say that “heavy drinking and physical aggression are most likely to occur together in a society with a cultural configuration that supports or tolerates both types of behaviour,” as the Airborne did.

### *Living Conditions*

Living conditions in the camp were extremely difficult for the first three months of the deployment, slowly improving as time went on.

*The first couple of weeks were hell. I remember very, very well touching down at the air strip in Belet Huen. There was so many of us bundled into that Herc. That big bird. They didn't have enough seats for everybody so we were sitting on the floor. They had cargo straps going across and we had to hook the straps. There wasn't enough seats for everybody to sit in and not enough seat belts. We were sitting on the floor of the plane hanging onto the straps while the airplane was landing. Then we got the warning prior to landing that it was going to be a hot landing. Meaning that the plane wasn't going to stop completely. The engines would still be running. While the airplane was going down the gate was already lowering. We touched ground, taxied to the end of the air strip, did an about turn, the ramp went down and it was, “Go! Go! Go!” Everybody just ran off the plane with a piece of kit and then we turned around facing the airplane, walking toward it and there was this huge cloud of dust at us because the props were still going. You were just walking toward the plane and kits were being thrown off because the fly boys wanted to get out of there.*

*You know we had just left a five star hotel in Nairobi. Nice and clean, going into Somalia. Touch ground. From that day on it was nothing but dust and dirt. Lots of sweat. Dust and dirt. First nine days I wore the same clothes because we didn't have facilities. We were basically the first bunch to hit the town. In other rotations you get there, the installations are already set up. You just basically move in. The other guys move out and we take over. In Somalia nothing was set up. We were making ourselves comfortable as we were moving along. We didn't have any kind of accom-*

*modations. We had to set that up. We had to take a piece of land for ourselves and got to move the Somalis a little further so we could establish ourselves a compound. We didn't have any shower facilities. Water was on very, very high rations. They weren't sure yet as to how many flights we could get in and how many supplies we could get into Belet Huen. So for the first nine days I wouldn't have seen new clothes or a shower.*

*Initially there was no camp. You're talking about a camp as if we appeared there and there was a camp waiting for us. That simply wasn't the case. We were dropped in the desert and we constructed the camp.*

*The camp was always under construction. It was never completed. When we first arrived, we cleared out the animal feces, dug trenches and set up our fences. It was a wild desert. It wasn't pleasant, but we are soldiers. Living quarters initially consisted of a ground sheet slung between two bushes. Just something to keep the sun off of you.*

*The first couple of weeks were hell....at night you hear the donkeys, people screaming, herders walking their camels, with a funny looking coconut bell at their neck. All sorts of noise. You're trying to orient yourself and adapt to your new surroundings. The first couple of weeks were rough. The weather was at least 45°C. Scorching hot. Blistering heat. Dry, dry winds. Very dry winds. If you take for example down here we have humidex of 32°C, down there it was 45°C dry heat. It was unreal. Unreal.*

*This place is a nightmare. It is so hot and dusty here that you can't keep clean enough to enjoy it. I haven't had a shower yet and we are living in trenches (quote from a letter home).*

Hygiene was difficult. The inability to wash oneself let alone one's clothes for the first weeks of deployment was very difficult. Once the water situation was under control soldiers were able to take showers. However, this often seemed like a losing battle since one was shortly coated in sweat and dust again.

*I got six litres of water out of which you had to drink at least four litres a day if you didn't want to dehydrate yourself. That left you with two litres of water to wash yourself, shave and brush your teeth. I used to stand in this bucket and punch holes in my litres of water, dump it on top of me and just rinse. Slightly lather so you don't use too much so you wouldn't need*



*too much water to rinse. Rinse myself standing in that bucket and then wash my clothes in that dirty water. There was no other supply, it was the only water you had. Six litres of water and have a nice day and that was yours. Whether you drank it, washed in it, whatever, it was yours. Remember you had to drink at least four litres. When new supplies started to come in, we had at least 16 litres of water per day.*

*It was difficult. We didn't really have our first shower for almost eight weeks. We were basically just taking a bottle and putting holes in it and the old navy shower. You wet yourself, soap up and it comes off and that's it. You didn't really want to use too much water for washing because you needed it for drinking.*

*One of the things I found most disagreeable was the severe shortage of water when we first got on the ground. We were issued six, two litre bottles for drinking water, and when water was available you were getting it to wash with. I had gone 23 days before I had my first shower. It sounds worse than it was, because after the first week you can't smell each other anymore. You're immune to it. But 23 days is a long time to go and that type of thing contributes to the stress, because you're dirty and sweaty all the time. I can remember doing laundry. You would set up big wash tubs and you would do your laundry and there was only so much water. By the time the last person's clothes are going through, the water was just mud. You didn't want to be the last person to do your clothes. Those type of things develop stress.*

Another source of stress in terms of personal hygiene was the latrine situation. In the beginning soldiers were using plastic bags. Plastic port-potties were eventually sent out but these closed plastic booths proved to be totally inappropriate for the heat of Somalia. They were soon customized by chopping off the roofs and screening them in but they were never really considered satisfactory. This may sound trivial but everyone in the interviews has mentioned the latrine conditions as a source of stress. This may be due to the fact that almost everyone in the tour was stricken with diarrhea at one time or another. Although it was rarely mentioned, one needs to reflect on the psychological impact of the "runs" on men who pride themselves on a macho warrior image. When asked what the most difficult aspect of the job in Somalia was by the Board of Inquiry, one soldier responded "Coping with diarrhea. That was the biggest thing, coping with diarrhea. Not the heat, not the people, not the food, not the rations; coping with the sickness" (Testimony of Pte Grant BOI: 872).

*But the dirt. One of the things that concerned us is that there was really no plumbing facilities, nothing like we know in Canada. Somalis relieve themselves wherever they relieve themselves. So once that dries and gets into the dust who knows what we are breathing in. You often wonder what you are exposed to or what was blowing in the wind. So we had a lot of diarrhea cases in extreme forms. There was dysentery like people had never experienced.*

The smell was overwhelming. The refuse from the latrines could not be easily disposed of in the heat. Eventually Somalis were hired to burn the feces with diesel fuel but this was not a totally satisfactory solution since diesel fuel takes a long time to burn and needs to be constantly stirred in the mixture to assure an adequate burn. In addition, animals were kept and butchered in the squatter settlements which sprung up around the Canadian camp. The Somalis in the squatter settlements did not have latrine facilities so odours were a source of discomfort.

*This is a patrol. What you have to understand is that these streets, the smells is like oh ya. Because there was often carcasses and they eat different things and it just smells different than an average Canadian white boy would experience.*

*Just the general smell made life difficult. There was a field where they buried the dead from the town. It was also the little refugee camp. It was also the washroom. I remember, three people came from the refugee camp and squatted right in front of us. They tied the camels to a tree and that's where they slaughtered them. They just threw up their guts and everything basically right there. The smell came right through us the whole time. Between the dead animals and the human waste and everything else, the smell would just knock you over half the time. And with all the garbage and everything, you couldn't eat or drink without having a million flies crawling through your mouth or your face. It was a disgusting place.*

*Now the other big problem was, it's a rude word, the shitters. It was an ongoing saga; sanitation was an ongoing problem. They sent us Blue Thunders, that's what the military calls port-a-potties — Blue Thunders. They sent a whole bunch with us, and of course they couldn't cope with the volume of debris from nearly a thousand people. Anyway, these were boiling hot, can you imagine going when it's nearly 50 degrees outside, and they were completely closed off. So they were modified a million dif-*

*ferent ways. The smell was amazing, I cannot tell you, it was just repulsive. We ended up burning the debris, I mean we paid Somalis to burn it, pour fuel on it and burn it to kill the maggots. I mean, you couldn't look down, let's put it that way, it was terrible at the best of times. But it was a factor of our lives, that condition. So the shitters were quite the real thing. Before the shitters we used plastic bags, but that was a big problem because someone had to carry the plastic bags. Shitters were a big bone of contention and a morale issue.*

The food was unpalatable. The dietary regime was a source of strain for many. Canadian soldiers were forced to eat hard rations which are high-calorie pre-packaged meals, the entire time. Although suitable for short manoeuvres in Canada, there was not enough variety to sustain interest over a six-month period. Also, there is a question of the contents being suitable for the intense heat of Africa. For example, Gatorade™ would have been preferable over the hot tea, coffee and hot chocolate drinks supplied.

*Have you ever seen a boil in the bag camping food? It's boil in a bag food by Freddy Chef. Hot chocolate...the last thing in the world when it's 60°C.*

Maple buds and other candies melted. In these conditions a beer can seem like good food.

*Six months of IMPs [individual meat packs] is unreal. I lost 20 pounds down there mostly because of the heat and the hard work we were doing. But I'm sure the IMP's had something to do with it. They have a very high calorie intake. Again I can't really say the IMP's made me skinny. But the fact that we were eating them so much makes you not want to eat them that often. The only thing that was good about having IMP's down there is you didn't need to heat them up. You just put them on any dark surface. Something that will attract the sunlight. Throw it on there for about five minutes and it was scorching hot. Ya, you know the sun was so hot. You just leave them out in the sun for awhile and they're good to go. We started frying them for a little variation. Try to put something a little different in our mouths. Six months of IMP's is rough, real rough.*

*The longest I went without eating was five days 'cause I just couldn't stomach another ration. I think a lot of guys did that. If it wasn't for my loved ones sending me food I think I would have starved to death. Rations are OK for a little while but six months, that's too much for anybody.*

*Soldiers typically don't like hard rations. You get sick of it after awhile. We had a lot of care packages and I think the soldiers generally didn't really understand why we were eating hard rations after three months there. We ate a lot of hard rations on and off in Gagetown. It's part of the training. But over a long period of time like that, I don't think people were ever really on hard rations for six months before. That was probably a first.*

Moreover, there was resentment that other United Task Force (UNITAF) soldiers were eating fresh food while the Canadians were still on hard rations. It is important to stress that it is relative deprivation that is important in soldiers' lives, not absolute deprivation. The soldier's sense of deprivation was not dependent on an absolute level, but was relative to the perceived level in the groups with which he compared himself (Parmar 1994: 140). Gifford et al. (1993: 5) also found that U.S. soldiers in Somalia "typically brought up the lack of consumer goods such as soft drinks, snack foods and PX sundry items as a stressor." "It was not the lack of these items that upset them so much as the perception that other units or other services had them."

*Nobody can live on hard rations for that long. But then people started to travel to other contingents and nobody else was on hard rations. And how come we're stuck on these basics. We're tired of bags and this and that. Although you made do with what you had.*

Almost all the soldiers I interviewed mentioned that they had lost weight in Somalia.

*Soldiers suffered from sunburn and heat exhaustion. There was lots of dehydration, lots of parasites — intestinal parasites. I guess the average soldier lost 20 lbs.*

*Yeah I lost 30 something pounds the whole time I was there. Getting sick and stuff like that, everybody lost weight.*

*I lost about 18 or 20 pounds over there. We just ate rations for about a month. The only thing the cooks could do was about one real meal a week. After three or four months, I couldn't eat the rations anymore, no matter what they'd do to them. We lived off the care packages our families would send. I never thought I would have been so happy to see a box of macaroni and cheese.*



Seaton (1964) conducted a test of calorie deficiency in military men in extreme conditions. In this experiment and “in a situation of high demand from an inhospitable external environment, compulsory groups were subjected to increments of stress involving (1) prolongation of task over time, (2) a more difficult work method, (3) and deprivation (underfeeding)” (Seaton 1964: 245). He found not only signs of physical stress but a definite correlation between calorie deficiency and group cohesion. In addition to expected self-ratings of irritability, teams became favourable to themselves but hostile to out-groups (Seaton 1964: 242). Most noticeable, as distinct effects of hunger, were the emergence of cliques and a narrowing of relationships (Seaton 1964: 246). Hungry groups were “more primitive and immature” (Seaton 1964: 244). It is not possible to say that Seaton’s results are applicable to the Airborne in Somalia. However, they are interesting given the extreme weight loss that many soldiers experienced there.

Toward the end of the tour, a kitchen was organized and bread rolls were baked every day and one fresh meal a week was served to those who were not out on patrol. Soldiers were also creative with spices and once regular links with home were set up they began receiving food care packages from home.

*A lot of people had their care packages with all kinds of things in them. A lot of people became very good at that, working on their ration packs. But the heat was tremendous. Which I think did things to a lot of people. It was a major thing at least for me. As far as I’m concerned. Because it was so uncomfortable*

### *Relations with Home*

Prolonged absence from loved ones is considered a severe stress situation (Cockerham 1982: 56). This is compounded when communication with family members is limited. Soldiers said that five minutes of phone calls a week was not enough. One of the important masculine roles of the soldier is provider and protector of women and children. Not being able to do this for their families or even assure themselves that their families were alright was a source of stress for soldiers in Somalia. Mail contact was not bad but when the mail was lost for several weeks soldiers were very upset. For the Canadians, postal service was not good at the beginning of the tour (for example, they deployed December 13, 1992 but a postal detachment didn’t arrive in Nairobi until January 1993). As a result, some CARBG

members did not have mail for six weeks.<sup>8</sup> Capt Reinelt testified to the BOI (Vol. III: 736) that "there was a lot of frustration over the speed with which the mail didn't get home. It took over a month for my wife to get one letter, and she was very frustrated by that, as were a lot of other spouses, and the mail became a major issue." Mail from home is considered the most important form of communication, and when it does not arrive on time, it can have a very negative effect on individuals and groups. "The importance that mail from home has to morale and sense of well-being - positively, when received, and, negatively, when not - cannot be overstated" (Pinch 1994a: 112).

*We got a one five minute phone call every weekend I think. But the satellite phone system didn't work every week. Toward the end of the tour we had much better phone lines. But for the first three months you got to talk to home for five minutes once a week. It wasn't long enough to do very much.*

*Being away from home is definitely very stressful. It's hard to imagine what it's like. Guys come back from the phone and they have had a bad phone call and there's nothing you can do for the next week. You can't call back in an hour or two hours or three hours. Those things can eat at you for awhile. We got about five minutes a week on the phone, if it was working. So you had to make sure you didn't argue on the phone.*

*All the mail problems we had didn't help. It would have boosted morale to get news from our families and stuff. They had made contracts with private planes to deliver the mail for three weeks. There were lots of problems. We found out later.*

*You had five minutes of phone calls twice a week. In the beginning it was five minutes every second week. We went the first three or four weeks without talking to anybody. Even at five minutes twice a week people would really really get upset if you were 30 seconds over. It could mean a fist fight, because somebody else was waiting. People complained a lot about the mail, but I've seen that on other missions too. It doesn't matter how good the mail service is they complain. It's easier to do that than to really notice that your family doesn't write you.*

U.S. troops also had problems with communications. Early in the mission in Somalia, U.S. military behavioural scientists observed that some elements of low morale were directly related to lack of telephone contact.

Similarly, spouses of U.S. soldiers in Somalia identified communications as the third most stressful dimension of the deployment, after loneliness and fear about soldiers' safety (Ender 1995: 1, 6). Gifford et al. (1995: 5) identified the difficulty in communicating with family and friends back in the United States as a stressor that was universally cited by U.S. soldiers in Somalia. "The lack of opportunity to send letters or telephone home was compounded by a general feeling of lack of information as to what was happening in the US or the world at large." The U.S. Army did as much as it could to rectify the situation, even to the extent of establishing e-mail contact (Ender 1995).

When family and friends are distant, the primary social group in the military unit (e.g., section, troop or platoon) takes on a particular importance.

When deployed on UN missions, the CF member is typically isolated from family, friends and Canadian society in general, and the member's primary group assumes all of these roles. Group membership has significantly increased in value because the consequence of not belonging is total isolation. It follows that the values, attitudes and beliefs of the primary group become more salient and influential when other support is lacking. In effect, peer cohesion of this kind, representing a horizontal network of attachments and influences, may have a positive effect on the organization's goals, if group norms are congruent with organizational norms, or a negative effect if they are incongruent with organizational norms...the norms of the immediate social group often provide a primary source of understanding and guidance for a member. Problems will occur, however, if the norms of the member's primary group are incompatible with those of the unit's leadership. This being the case, the member, will face an increasingly difficult task in reconciling the competing demands of peer and organizational norms. If unsuccessful, the consequence could include degraded performance, neglect of duty, or, the worst case, a serious breach of discipline (Grandmaison and Cotton 1993: 7, 8 and 9).

As noted, there was already a trend in the Airborne toward strong bonding among NCMs, and an informal leadership arose in Petawawa which was perceived as a threat to authority. If the CF experience in other UN missions can be seen as an indicator, then this trend would only be reinforced in an isolated environment such as Somalia.

The length of deployment was unclear. Capt Blackman testified to the BOI (p. 1123) that "the only thing that really was a drain on our morale was

the million dollar question of when this operation would end...it was a question of not knowing the end date." Our interviews also showed that there was considerable confusion as to when soldiers would be going home. In a letter home dated January 17, 1993, James Steed wrote "Don't know when I return but it could be in March or, the rumour around here, in August."

*Another thing that was very difficult was that until Easter or until Good Friday nobody knew how long we would be there for. We had been there for about two months and everybody was saying: "There's nothing going on here. What are we here for? When are we going back home? It was hard lingering there and wanting to get home, not knowing when we're going home. For the first while we didn't even know if we were going to have leave. Because again there were no clear-cut dates.*

Although some were told in the beginning that their length of stay in Somalia was to be six months, there were also rumours that soldiers would have to stay two years. This created a confusing situation to say the least. Miller and Moskos' (1995: 620) study of Operation Restore Hope found that the major source of stress among American troops was "not knowing when the deployment would end." Similarly, Gifford et al. (1995) who did a study for the Surgeon General of the Army to assess soldiers' coping and adaptation to the stresses of Operation Restore Hope said there was wide agreement among interviewees that the greatest stressor for them was the uncertainty about when they would return home. *Not knowing when we were going home was very hard and got everyone thinking a lot.* Another factor was the nature of the Airborne itself. As we noted earlier, the perception of being a rapid intervention force had an impact on the way the camp was set up; it also affected morale.

The Airborne always had the belief that it was a rapid action force, that it got in, did the mission and left. So after we were there for a couple of weeks people said: "Where is the aircraft home?" Even though they trained for over a year for a long-term peacekeeping mission, they thought that they were leaving in two weeks. Because the Airborne was that kind of unit, they were supposed to go in, secure whatever was the objective, then real long-term troops are supposed to come in. So somehow this attitude was there. After three weeks they all wanted to catch the plane home. That was quite unreasonable, but it was a product of their training. Whatever training they had for Sahara and Somalia hadn't overcome this. We're the short term solution, the stopgap finger in the dike, then the long-standing peacekeepers come. And once they realized that maybe the plane wasn't going to



come tomorrow, we were in the mission a month and a half or so, they started to get upset. There was more drinking and they started getting a little angry.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS

Studies show that environmental stressors have an impact on soldiers health but what is particularly interesting is that some temperature studies show that climate can affect group cohesion and attitudes toward out groups. Difference in landscape and climate have a well-known effect on health and well-being, but in a combat theatre the most striking factor is the relative helplessness against the most unpleasant features of the terrain. In addition, the monotony of the landscape and the almost complete deprivation of the ordinary comforts and pleasures of one's accustomed existence produce a special type of strain which, according to Grinker and Spiegel (1945: 27) can affect the group.

*I was thinking about the very first time that I could leave. I spent my time planning when I could come home. I had a calendar. I felt I was in prison. There were no walls, but the two thousand miles of desert out there, that was a pretty damn good wall. I couldn't escape.*

*Now what was camp life like? very boring, very hot, very, very hot.... Commandos they went out on patrols. They would go out, depending which unit they were in. They would go out for a few days or a few hours, come back, and have a number of days or hours on their hands. Of course not much to do and everyone was very bored.*

*Boredom started to settle in around three weeks after we got there. It was the first time out for some of us and it was like a feeling of abandonment. The boredom just grates inside of you, when nothings coming in from the outside. You can't survive in a camp like that: a TV, video, movies you've seen 15 times. It's just too much.*

Temperature information on Belet Huen indicates that during the first three to four months of the year, the temperature can exceed 40°C. If humidity is taken into account, the temperature may have felt like 50°C or more. The relative humidity of Belet Huen is apparently high and the amount of precipitation appears to increase significantly in March which is the month when the most notorious incidents involving Canadian Forces in Somalia occurred. To the soldiers, the heat seemed intense. As one of my interviewees described it: *I learned to sweat from my earlobes.*

The soldiers had left Petawawa in the middle of winter and found it difficult to adjust to the all-pervasive heat of Africa at 40°C.

*When I left Canada, there was three feet of snow on the ground and it was -30° outside. In Somalia, the high hit close to 45°C. Plus, once I ran off the aircraft, the engines were still going: dust and heat. It was quite the first impression anyhow. It was desolate, there was absolutely nothing around. It didn't look good, my first impression of Somalia.*

*So it was around 35° to 40° day and night. It got up to 50°. It was too hot to check. But I had seen the thermometer at 47°, and this was in the shade. I think I didn't get to full speed functioning for four to six weeks, maybe six weeks, in terms of heat acclimatization. So that physically and intellectually I wasn't at full speed in the beginning.*

*With temperatures of 45°, 50° or even more, we couldn't sleep during the day. So for those of us working at night, it was practically impossible to sleep during the day at first.*

It has been impossible to know the actual temperature in Belet Huen during the deployment. Many efforts were made to try and track down information describing daily temperatures in Belet Huen, but to no avail. However, it would seem that in 1993 temperatures were setting records. In a letter dated January 17, 1993 James Steed wrote to his parents, "It's getting up to 52 Celsius here during the day." Other soldiers said the same.

Hot environments are known to produce important physiological changes, largely because of a great increase in the body's cutaneous vascular bed during severe heat exposures. Skilled performance has been shown to deteriorate at levels of heat stress that result in a rise of body temperature above normal levels. Heat exhaustion can be compounded by frequent tasking. Since there is little opportunity for real recuperation in the intervals, the effect is cumulative. In a review of over 70 years of research on heat stress Kobrick and Johnson (1991) report the following effects of hot environments on military performance: vigilance tasks are impaired above 32°C, cognitive tasks are impaired above 38°C and visual acuity is impaired. Finally, "Tropic regions are also known to sap the will and motivation to perform, especially routine tasks, even though adequate rations, water and appropriate clothing and equipment may be available" (Kobrick and Johnson 1991: 223).



Passing things over the wire

The dust was everywhere. Soldiers would be caked in dust all the time and would even wake up in the morning with a film of fine dust over their teeth. Combine the dust and heat with the fact that soldiers were issued only two or three litres of water to wash themselves and their clothes for the first couple of weeks and you have a difficult situation.

*I used to wake up with a film of dust on my teeth every morning.*

*In Somalia, you wake up with a pile of dust on you every morning. You go for a shower and you walk back. If you're not completely dry, it just sort of sticks to you. And it's kind of gross. It's nice to feel fresh for a couple of seconds anyway.*

*The dust is the first thing to hit you. You would wake up in the morning and there was a film of dust on your teeth. It was incredible. Every morning you wake up that way. You just couldn't keep your mouth shut all night and big clouds of dust would just walk through the tents.*

*They gave us the worst piece of land in all of Somalia. We called it dust or tornado alley. All the dust devils go right through here, right through the Commando and rip our tents apart and everything. The Somalis wouldn't even live there, not even refugees.*

*Twice a day no matter where you were on that plain, a little dust devil would go over. The little mini tornado would dump dust on you. You and your things would be totally covered in dust, twice a day. So you'd want everything under cover if you could. And we learned that this dust contained the feces that was dropped on the ground just across the way. So it was dirty and we knew that it would make us sick.*

The insects were huge and some were poisonous. Soldiers were particularly impressed and afraid of the camel spider which could be over six inches in diameter. Some soldiers did not sleep well at first for fear that they would wake up with a spider in their sleeping cot. This bug was resistant to the spray/repellent brought overseas and could not easily be killed. Soldiers felt under attack by the environment itself.

*The insects down there were, I mean I hate spiders. They had the biggest critters down there. I remember setting my bed space up the first night. We had those bug nets. Whatever you call them. Bug nets and you know you*



*tuck everything inside and make sure nothing is coming into your bed space and even then I had problems sleeping at night. Just because the insects down there. Prior to deployment we had preventive medicine lectures on scorpions, snakes, spiders, a variety of bugs we could find down there and precautions to take to avoid being stung by them. Jesus, even that didn't prepare me for what I saw down there.*

*Termites. They were everywhere. They were on everything. In everything. Talk about things that affect morale. We had about two months into the tour. The termites hatched. Have you ever seen a termite hatch? Wow! A billion termites! Termites are little wing-like ants. It only lasted two days, but it was just terrible. They were everywhere. They were on everything.*

*One night one of the guys went to use the bathroom in the middle of the night and the ground was moving. There was a nest of African millipedes in between the latrine and our camp site. There was a big mound and it was full of millipedes. They were so thick at night they would sound like rain on the ground and tents. I would sleep with the groundsheet wrapped around me. That was the last night I slept on the ground.*

*The camel spiders are quite nasty bugs, also called sun spiders. They're hairy little beauties. They run so fast. They have upper and lower mandibles so when they bite they lock on and give you quite a nasty bite. There was a guy that was bit by a spider and the whole top of his hand turned black. The camp was full of them. One night, I killed 10 of them.*

*When we sweat our pores get bigger and the flies were laying eggs beneath the skin so after a while you would get what looks like a zit on your arm. What they do is feed off the flesh and they can grow quite large. There were also the snakes like black mambas and carpet vipers.*

*We only got our floors put into our tents around the end of January, early February. So we weren't on the ground anymore. That was a real bonus. The spiders, the big camel spiders, man they could bite. You know I had one climb up on the ceiling and fall down on my chest in the middle of night. I was up out of bed in a flash. You'd hear them scuttling around. That kind of bothered me.*

Soldiers took to organizing camel spider fights like cock fights for entertainment. Soldiers also raced iguanas and other local fauna.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL STRESS

Soldiers in Somalia experienced much of the same stress associated with combat. In addition to the stress of being in an exposed position in their camp, they were also at risk when they were in the field. Although this is par for the course for a soldier, the prolonged risk of threat which could strike at any moment in the form of a stabbing or land mine, was ever-present.

*We've been doing a lot of patrols and roadblocks, taking weapons away from the bandits. We did a roadblock on a bridge for six hours the other night and it felt like it was never going to end. You really have to be careful on those ones because it is so dark there and the pedestrians are so busy they just might stick you with a knife (letter home).*

*You never knew when someone was going to shoot you. Especially on Friday night, or later in the evening, if there was a khat shipment that came in. During Ramadan, when the Somalis would party at night, they'd be all high on khat and that was a bad time of the year for us.*

*It was a risk for us with the Somalis chewing khat and being on drugs and having access to weapons easily. We were not beyond having some muslim fanatic come at us, so yes it was dangerous.*

*Khat was another problem. There was an extreme drug problem in Belet Huen. Khat is a cheap man's cocaine. Pretty much like speed. It's a leaf they chew. A plant that's very much like a high dose of caffeine or cocaine. It actually increases their heart rate and gives them a feeling of euphoria. It's used in a lot of African countries to probably combat hunger pains or to make them feel better. Apparently the khat comes in early in the afternoon. Usually they're wacked right out of it by 5 o'clock. And you would see a lot of the Somali's eyes completely fully dilated. And those were the most dangerous times.*

*We don't know what to expect. We were living in uncertainty. We didn't know where the whole operation was going. The camp was like a prison, a closed-off world. When we got back to camp, we were among ourselves, but we could never know what to expect. We were in constant doubt about our safety. Because of the routine, you get too used to the danger. There could have been worse incidents because there was so much uncertainty. The guy who passes by in the morning with his cart could just as well turn up the next night with a grenade. We never knew what to expect.*

*We were perpetually exposed to risks, the risk of riots. Just the regular patrols were a risk. It was a very unpredictable environment where danger literally lurked outside of the wire. The biggest stress was that we were at risk for our lives on occasion.*

*They felt a general distrust wherever we were. We often had weapons pointed at them and when the crowds were swarming it produced a lot of fear. It was so unpredictable for us.*

*We felt that we were at risk and in an unpredictable surrounding.*

*They all look alike and you can't tell them apart. Amongst each other they could tell who were the good people or the bad or from what faction you were from. If you take the gangs from Los Angeles they wear colours, some of them are Spanish, some of them are Blacks. Down there the gangs all look the same but the villagers know who's from where and what their purpose is in the village. We couldn't tell ourselves just by looking at them. But they knew who they were.*

There was also an absence of conventional military fronts. Traditional combat training had not prepared the Airborne for the ambiguity of peace making.

*When we got there, there was no war. The war had gone by. Probably for some guys that was a disappointment.*

*Airborne guys are very proud for a reason. Very proud. Their self-esteem is very high. They're a tough bunch of guys. They do things that most people wouldn't do. Jump out of airplanes is one of them. Jump out of airplanes loaded with kit is another one. The training they do is very, very rugged. Most of their training is not for peace making. Definitely not for peace-making situations. They are shown and taught aggressiveness.*

Once the Canadians concluded that they were "wasting their time" in Somalia, came the brutal conclusion that one could die "for nothing."

*The overall attitude is "what's worth dying for in this country?" Nothing is worth dying for here. We have the feeling we're not wanted here. We try to make a difference. We build a bridge over a mine field, and again you ask yourself "what's worth dying for in this country?"*

## CULTURE SHOCK

In the same way that soldiers experienced climate shock they also experienced culture shock. Somalis looked, acted and spoke differently. Soldiers began to feel almost as if they were on another planet. According to Schein (1985: 24-25) a "new language, strange customs, unfamiliar sights, sounds and smells and unpredictable behavioural responses from locals make it hard to relax." It seemed to many as though they had been ripped out of one world in which the familiar order of cause-effect, means-end, premises-conclusions operated and had been transported to another.

Canadian soldiers also had some trouble with the gender behaviour of Somali men. They were shocked by men holding hands and squatting to urinate like women (even though this is more discreet when one is wearing a sarong).

*And the public toilets, that was something to see. We urinate standing up, but there, the men urinate sitting down like women!*

*Real men wear pants and stand to urinate and they certainly don't hold hands.*

*A lot of the guys had problems with the culture as well. In the sense of the poverty that they saw and for a lot of the guys they had a hard time to see how the women were treated. In the sense that men didn't do a lot of the work, the women did all the household chores, if you want to call them that — going to get the water, the food, the wood for fire. So it seemed that the women being unjustly treated and the men were being very lazy. Because you would see the men in groups, talking and talking. Also they hold hands. When the guys saw that well everyone thought, "Everybody's gay here! What's going on!" Of course that's the way the Somalis express their friendship. You never saw that, men and women holding hands there. That's taboo, as far as the Muslims are, but still to a lot of soldiers that part of the world is bad, it's wrong. They don't know how to live.*

*There was quite a lot of homosexuality. That bothered a lot of people, to see two men walking hand in hand. We weren't ready because no one told us. If only they had prepared us, to have an idea of how they live. They told us about military security, weapons, military organization and the like, but nothing about the culture.*



*It was like, at first there was the old "look they're holding hands." The biggest problem people had was that they were holding hands while the women were carrying all the kit, carrying all the stuff. I don't know if there were ever rude comments about homosexuality, which popped into mind for most of the tough guys. But it was a, kind of a source of scorn. The Somalis weren't as much of a man because they hold hands.*

The Canadian soldiers were particularly disturbed by the cultural practice of female circumcision and by the way Somali men treated Somali women.

*Once the guys told me they found a woman just lying in the ditch, dying. This bothered me terribly, it's been one of those things that I'm hoping it was just talk. And she was laying there dying, and was almost dead and you know there are always Somalis on the road, and they would just keep walking by her, leaving her there to die. And they watched, you could tell they were sort of horrified by watching this image of this women dying. So what they did was move this woman to shelter with a bottle of water.*

*The guys would walk through town and everything would be nice and cool, but on the way back, there would be a bundle in the middle of the intersection. They would open it up and see a kid who probably had malaria or some other type of disease and was going to die. The kid was probably going to die anyhow. They could do nothing for the kid, except take it to the local hospital, and the hospital wouldn't do anything without an adult being there to actually claim the kid at the end. What really frustrated me was that they had more time for their goats and camels and everything else they had than for human life.*

*We saw the man walking along and a woman behind loaded down with 50 pounds of firewood, her chin rubbing on the ground — sometimes it was just — oh the bastard.*

*It's frustrating to see. Women do everything over there. They get the water, cook, do everything, but they sleep outside. But the men, they sit around, don't do anything all day long. They visit their friends and that's about it. It's so frustrating.*

*I didn't like the way they hit kids. I didn't like the fact that the children slept outside the huts. I didn't like what they did to their women which to me was mutilation. Would that make me angry enough to punch one of them in the*

*head? No. But quite honestly it angered me a lot of times. Because the women, and you would see little girls, with back breaking loads. You know carrying firewood and everything else. These little girls with no childhood. Ya that was disturbing. You also had to remember it wasn't your country. I think the majority of us far and away knew that. That we weren't really there to make those comments. Certainly in your mind you say "you lazy son of a you know. Why don't you get off of your and help that poor little girl." But that's part of our culture. You don't treat women like that. We don't treat our kids like that. I don't know what's right or wrong. Maybe their way is just as right as our way. But at the time when you could only relate to your experience sure it's upsetting.*

The interviews are full of comments on how the men let the women do all the work and tried to keep the food for themselves.

*We had problems with the way women were treated. Unloading vehicles on the airfield, for example. In come the planes by one of the aid agencies, with sacks of grain or whatever. And one of the soldiers said get the people in the truck in here to unload the grain, and the Somalis had all the women carry all the heavy sacks while all the Somali men directed. The guys couldn't cope with that and it created anger.*

*Their women have no rights at all. They're pack mules. You'd see a guy walking with his stick and two or three wives behind him with bundles of wood and stuff like that that'd break my back. And they'd be walking along behind him unless there was a mine field. Then they'd be walking in front of him. We probably stepped over the line doing the road block sometimes. They packed the trucks full so we'd get them all out — 75 or 80 people sometimes — and then we'd get it unloaded to look for contraband or illegal weapons and stuff like that. As soon as it's over, they'd start getting the women to load it up. We'd stop them and make the guys load.*

At times, Canadian soldiers would force the men to stay back and serve the women and children first during food relief distribution.

*The thing that got the guys, more than anything else, was that they would see two men holding hands with the women behind with the wood and the food and the kids and the water and pulling the donkeys. The inequality was a bone of contention. The inequality also came out in other ways, in communities or societies like that the men get things first. It just appears*

*to be the way that it is. When it came to distributing things, the men would all push to the front while the women and the children were at the back. The troops physically held the men aside so that the women and the children could go first. We know culturally that that's against the rules, but is one thing that we couldn't deal with. The women and children always appeared poorer and thinner.*

A group, in this unique intercultural situation, "attaches its own meanings to events, and develops assumptions about itself and its environment that begin to operate as silent filters on perceptions" (Schein 1985: 41). This could lead to the reinforcement of the "mean world syndrome" as discussed earlier. In such a mean and dangerous world, most people "cannot be trusted and most people are just looking out for themselves" (Gerbner cited in Miedzian 1991: 214). Canadian soldiers made almost identical comments about Somalis in the interviews.

*You can be angry at your government, you can be angry at the general in headquarters in Mogadishu, but you don't see the guy. You can get angry about a whole lot of things, but it's the Somali that you see. He's a real person. And as time goes on, he wears a myth as well. The Somali becomes whatever you want. Part of the myth of the Somali is that the Somalis did not value human life in the same way as us. For example, road accidents. Nobody goes to help the victims because if they die, they die. If they live, they live. To us, in Canada, life is the most important thing, so you will do everything to save a life. So, how do you bring the two together? The Somali doesn't think my way, so therefore he's got to be wrong — is the attitude. Somali women have to do everything. It's got to be wrong. A man can have two or three wives. That is wrong, because in Canada, you are only allowed one. Children are left on their own. They look after themselves. Parents should look after children. All those kinds of things. Somalis don't care about their fellow human beings. They see themselves as fairly high up, even better than us. So that's brought some conflict.*

### *Rejection*

Canadians believed they would be welcomed by the local population as liberators of a population terrorized by clan warlords, harbingers of freedom and hope (look at the name of the American operation in Somalia: Restore Hope) and as providers of security and moral authority before which the forces of tyranny would recede.

If the soldiers believed they would arrive and portray the soldier-hero-humanitarian, the reality of the field situation was a rude awakening. Canadians were the ones being treated as the “bad guys,” unwanted. Rocks and insults were thrown, and their rules of the game were not respected.

*I had rocks thrown at me while I was out running. They didn't understand why we jogged of course, what a waste of energy. Yep, I had rocks hurled at me. I was so angry once that I picked up a rock and threw it back. We all had rocks thrown at us when going downtown. It was not as bad as Mogadishu, I have to admit that. And we also knew they were saying rude things about us. We could get over that, but the rocks. Rocks do a lot of damage. But yeah, that was very much a part of our lives.*

*When we first got there, they were yelling “gallo gallo gallo” and us, being the dumb Canadians, everybody thought they were saying hello. But they were calling us honkies, infidels. And the little kids, they had the old David and Goliath sling shots. And they were pretty good with them. We saw one little kid get killed with one of them slingshots one night. You'd go through town and a rock would come sailing at you. It happened all the time.*

*They give the finger all the time. And they would pick up gestures from us, flip you the bird or whatever. They picked up on that language pretty quick.*

*Even the medics could get rocks thrown at them, and they wore a red cross on their arm, so the Somalis knew who they were, with all the International Red Cross organizations there. That just shows me the total disrespect for what we were there to do.*

*We used to get shot at with rocks. Or they'd call you “gallo” which is their word for heathen or whatever. That bothered a lot of guys but not me.*

*At night watch, our guys could see the Somalis come by and make faces and rude gestures, so our guys would go scare them off, but it was kind of a curiosity on both sides. It wasn't always positive, I'm sure.*

*I don't know, but what's important for them is to remember that we are the infidels, the gallos. So hey let's throw stones at the infidels. Talk about stone age!*

There was the idea among soldiers that peace making should be fair play. (This could be in part from movies where good and bad are clear and



from military training which encourages soldiers to see things in terms of black and white, figuratively speaking.) Canadian soldiers felt that Somali citizens should be grateful.

*There were quite a few incidents where people threw rocks at us in town and 2 Commando bore the brunt of it. But I think it was also because some of 2 Commando were so gung-ho, so tense, the Somalis could read that. 2 Commando had the most dealings with people in town, they saw the most crookedness, the most of what was wrong. I guess 2 Commando got bad impressions of the Somalis. Never being able to take it in and say this is a different world, to grasp the difference in the culture of the Somalis, to accept the way they were. I mean, seeing somebody day in, day out, somebody whose whole house is about six feet tall and ten feet wide. That's his house — takes a little while to get used to. But to accept that this is this person's way of life, he doesn't know how to read, he doesn't know how to write, hasn't seen a television in his life. Eventually the soldiers didn't want anything to do with Somalis.*

*I never had a lot of sympathy for the Somalis. I don't know if that makes me a bad person or not. But I really didn't. I never saw a starving Somali. I never saw a grateful Somali. I just never had much sympathy for the Somalis. They just got themselves into trouble.*

*As long as you keep giving them stuff you're okay. You have to keep giving and giving and giving and giving and giving and nothing is ever enough.*

*What was frustrating was that they didn't seem to help themselves. We were sent there to help them, and they did nothing to help us. It's as though they were ready to just stay that way. For example, we brought wood to work with, to fix their bridges and stuff. We brought all the material to the edge of the bridge and the next morning it was all gone. It would have helped them. We would bring them things and they would rip us off. It's as though they didn't want help. They just wanted to stay as they were. Canada wanted to help them rebuild from what they still had, instead of starting from zero, put them on the right track, but they weren't ready for that.*

*We'd built schools and bridges. Pedestrian traffic was heavy on the bridge. Finally somebody said: "Enough, let's build them a walking bridge," but after awhile they were stealing the wood from the bridge. They had it roped off so people wouldn't fall in the river. They were stealing the ropes. They*

*weren't even appreciative of the work we were doing for them. They just kept destroying everything we were building and I think that was the turning point really, for me anyhow. It was one of the big turning points against the Somalis, around mid-February. I went from feeling sorry for them down to being fed up, thinking, "Let's get out. They brought it all on themselves." Which is true, because they knew we were there to help them. Even the Somalis that we were killing. They were saying he was a thief, he was gaining too much power and it's a good thing that he's gone. You know it's like they're praising us. Meanwhile we're coming back here and we're getting crucified. There's just no happy medium here. I'm just happy we're out of there.*

Canadians weren't the only ones to be disillusioned by Somali behaviour. The Auditorat général, Belgique (1993: 27) reported soldiers left for Somalia in the spirit of helping but were disappointed by the welcome they received. Sometimes stones and grenades were thrown at them, and there was gunfire. There was also a certain Somali attitude about "demanding" humanitarian aid. Similarly, Gifford et al. (1995: 6) describe the "growing hostility from Somalis, in the form of rock throwing or sniping frustrated soldiers" as a source of stress for U.S. soldiers. "Soldiers had deployed with idealistic feelings about the operations, and these were being challenged."

### *Frustration*

Soldiers were frustrated by a number of things, particularly a sense of impotency in controlling the situation and an inability to curb stealing. Soldiers would work only to have it undone by rules and limitations put on their actions.

*I certainly felt there was no clear mandate as to what our job was. At one point we were told to disarm, or to make sure the people didn't have weapons. But there were incidents where weapons were taken away, and later on they were given back. Sometimes we identified there were weapons or heavy weapons somewhere but the guys couldn't touch them. That was what was hard to stomach. 'Cause we wanted to help and with a soldier that is one way he knows he can help, when he takes that weapon away 'cause then the enemy is clear. He's the enemy, take the weapon away, you disarm, and then he is no longer the enemy per se. But that was taken away from us, we weren't allowed to do our job. We would make sure that food was brought to different areas, then when we would stop to*

*see how things were, we would find that the food was either stolen or sold when it wasn't supposed to. So it was very demoralizing.*

*We'd be doing security and a vehicle would pull up with 30 bags of beans. We'd ask where it was going and they'd say none of your damned business. OK, our job was just to escort them from there to the warehouse. They can do whatever they want with it and they used to give it away to sell it. You could go downtown to the market and you see marked on the bag — This is not for sale — it was printed in English — and they'd be selling it. And you're there like, well Jesus Christ, you know, what the hell are we doing here? A couple of times we confiscated it, loaded it back on the truck and sent it to the warehouse. An hour later, it was back on the truck.*

*We didn't disarm the city, but we did disarm the villages in our area. So what happened? People came from the city and robbed the villages that had no weapons. We went on a few village raids, looking for weapons, but we never got to the main problem. They were selling the food aid they were given and the bags were being stolen. We were wondering ourselves what we were doing, but we were following orders. I kept wondering how this thing was being run.*

*Something that made it extremely irritating to everybody was to go downtown to the local market and see our goods for sale. The only form of cooking we had was on these Coleman™ stoves, so you need some kind of fuel. Well those were hot items to steal. And we'd go down to the market and there would be cans of our stuff, sitting there being sold. They would have our water bottles, whatever. 2 Commando had to see that all the time. Chairs that they had stolen, you know like fold up chairs. Here we don't care about fold up chairs, but there where there is no wood to build anything and you have to sit on the ground in the dust, it does matter. I agree that it was irritating. Troops saw this and it created that feeling of frustration, well you start to lose the desire to try and think of others.*

U.S. soldiers reported the same problem: "Soldiers were especially frustrated that advance notice of US operations let bandits hide their weapons and that Safe Havens let them elude pursuit and continue to rob and murder" (Gifford et al. 1995: 9).

By February 1993, many American soldiers had developed doubts about the mission and its value. "We don't see any starving Somalis" was a frequent

comment in interviews conducted by Gifford et al. (1995: 8). "I think that we never should have come here because it's not really a poor country. They have the resources to make this a good nation but all they want to do is fight each other instead of helping each other. I think we should have minded our own business."<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that these reactions arose at the mid-point in the tour. According to the International Peace Academy, (1984: 384), there are two difficult periods in a six-month tour (of peace keeping): about halfway through the tour and the final few weeks.<sup>10</sup> Canadian soldiers had similar sentiments about Somalia.

*We brought back some sort of peace. We brought them social structure. Brought some kind of control back into their social structure. You could tell there was a big difference from the first couple of weeks when we got there, there was a big difference in the village. The economy was picking up and after a very short while you could feel that you weren't needed there anymore. That's when we started seeing them not as people trying to survive, but as people taking advantage. We started feeling as if we were extra there, not needed, not wanted, get out. By the end of February, beginning of March, we were feeling like extra. Definitely. We weren't serving much purpose down there anymore and it was time to go home.*

Even at the individual level, feelings about Somalis were mixed and complex. Soldiers deployed with idealistic feelings. Thus they arrived wanting to like Somalis. However, rock throwing and petty thefts as well as verbal insults and a few anti-American demonstrations frustrated soldiers. "Soldiers understood that the rock throwers and those who stole from them...did not represent all Somalis, but many reported that they could not help being influenced by their immediate negative experiences" (Gifford et al. 1995: 9).

Military political ideology has several main elements one of which is the indispensability of private property (Janowitz 1960, Van Doorn 1969: 77). Canadians were particularly frustrated by theft of property. The idea of theft is abhorrent to an Airborne soldier whose training puts emphasis on building trust and teamwork since you may one day have to trust a comrade with your life.

*It's all in the soldiers' attitude. We were just among ourselves. Nobody was robbing anyone else. Equipment would be passed from one to another but we didn't lose any, because people could trust one another.*



*I don't think anybody likes a thief. There is nothing worse than a liar and a thief. The guys were getting tired of it. Very, very frustrated. And you got to remember. If you're sleeping, it's like, Gurkha used to come in and slit peoples throats. Internal security really threatens people. That sort of victim feeling, that emptiness.*

Continuous stealing, in this context, would evoke very strong reactions, pushing soldiers into perceiving Somalis as generally untrustworthy and pushing frustrations even further.

*We were about six kilometres outside the village of Belet Huen itself. We had to go through the village to get to the airstrip. We were told to be very careful when going through the village. Because if anything gets damaged, they automatically seek some kind of refund. We'd be going through the village and we usually carry jerrycans of gas on the back, on the outside of the vehicle. And if you go slow enough for them to keep up with the vehicle and run behind ya, you can bet your butt there won't be any gas on that vehicle once you're through. Often they would, very smart people, they would rush in front of you if you stopped. Just enough to give time to the other people around back to come and cut the line off. Run away with your jerrycan of water or gas.*

*You have to understand the level of frustration. We were being ripped off every night. People were infiltrating an area where we were sleeping. It would be like people breaking into your home. Just sort of walking in and out and taking a loaf of bread off of the table. But never really threatening you. But clearly I understand these people are utterly destitute. A jerrycan may represent feeding their family for a month. They take a jerrycan, the UN can replace the jerrycan. Is it worth killing a person over? No. Never has been, never will be. Somebody trying to commit sabotage on a medivac chopper. Ya. Because that is my life means of getting out of here if I get my legs blown off. So I feel pretty strongly about that. And they had stolen that fuel pump. A couple of nights before the shooting death. So now they're back at the choppers creeping into work there. My own personal opinion. Do I think those kind of rules are correct. I'm probably jaded. Well not by nature. I'm probably a little more on the humanitarian side, but at the same time you have to protect yourself.*

*There was a lot of stealing happening, as much on your vehicle as in your camp. I don't know how they did it. Because there was at least three rows wide of that concertino wire which is razor sharp. If you happen to walk*

*around this with any cloth whatsoever you get caught in it. People were coming through it, over it, I don't know how they did it. It was three high but the first row was three wide. And they were still coming through it and stealing a lot of our things. This caused a lot of frustration 'cause you know orders were coming down as far as stealing and they were changing. Orders were always changing. For example, orders would come down, if you see anybody stealing just try to grab a hold of them and restrain them and we'll turn them into the authorities. And then it changed to warning shots. And then it changed again and it was always escalating like this and you never knew how to approach them. A lot of frustration toward anyone actually just coming near your kit and trying to grab a hold of it. It's part of your survival kit. Part of the things you need in order to be functional down there and we were going short day by day. Because what was being taken away from us. It was very hard to control. Like I said I don't know how they got in and out of camp. They made it through somehow.*

In his book on his experience in Somalia, Kyle Brown who was sent to prison for his role in the torture and beating of the Somali Shidane Arone, describes how the problem of infiltration seemed unsolvable and he mentions an "unwritten policy to rough up infiltrators when they were caught" (Worthington and Brown 1997: 98). We have seen how the soldiers were insulted by Somalis who called them names and it is possible that the constant stealing and infiltration was seen not only as a nuisance but as a form of insult or humiliation. In studies on the psychology of group behaviour, researchers have found that when the future victim has been overheard insulting the group, the harm experienced by the victim increases dramatically in both its intensity and its duration.<sup>11</sup> In studies of interracial violence using laboratory simulation the results were startling.

Sadly, the subjects (all White) tested in one investigation of collective aggression were very sensitive to the race of their victim. When groups of White participants were not insulted, they shocked Black victims less than White victims. However the reverse discrimination displayed in order to avoid the appearance of prejudice fell quickly by the wayside when the White group members were insulted. Under these circumstances, the Black victims experienced exponentially greater aggression than did White victims.<sup>12</sup>

It is impossible to determine whether the violence against Shidane Arone was a reaction to such feelings of aggression. However, our interviewees did talk about the high feelings in the camp.

*Some of the Somalis tried to come into the camp and steal things. To tell you the truth I don't blame them. We got there as millionaires, all this equipment, and they had nothing and so they had a chance to make a quick dollar. So they would come into camp, and some of them would be captured. Then released, and a lot of them would come back later, almost to the point that some were known. So that frustrated a lot of the guys. "Why can't we do something with them? Let's capture them and bring them to the jail in town." And nothing would happen. "Why can't they do something about this problem, why can't they deal with them the right way?" Whether its true or not I don't know, that the local police were afraid to do anything because they might be from the wrong clan. Or for their own personal safety. "The police were fed, the prisoners were fed. Well, how come we were feeding those people?" A whole lot of questions. Which the guys had a hard time to understand, and I know when the murder happened, tensions were probably very high. "We're going to sort them out, we're going to teach them the right way to live, we're going to teach them a lesson."*

*They had a twisted attitude toward thievery. A lot of it was probably part of this ego, the indignation that the Arabs steal from the Airborne Regiment. How can anybody dare steal from people that are helping them. So this was immensely annoying, particularly when they would lose something that was crucial to their operation. The original idea was good, for dealing with thieves: Pop the guy a few times and he goes back with a bloody nose and tells his friends. But things are different. We don't do that any more. That makes tactical sense. Beat them up, but don't kill them. That was the order of the day. Some went a little bit too far of course.*

*Tensions were high. A lot of people were wondering why we weren't doing something with the Somalis. "We got to teach them a lesson so they stop coming into camp." So all this was going on at the same time and then I think the Somali was killed not long after.*

It is also interesting to note that Belgian paratroopers responded equally brutally to Somalis suspected of theft.<sup>13</sup> Some of my interviewees thought that Shidane Arone had been "baited" into entering the Canadian camp and that the idea was to give him "a real bloody nose and toss him back over the wire" so he would spread the news to not steal from the Canadian camp. Kyle Brown implicated in the beating of Shidane Arone writes: "Somewhere along the line I came to the conclusion that if cir-



cumstances ever put me in the situation of guarding prisoners, I'd do everything possible to make sure they got the message that they were now risking their lives if they came back" (Worthington and Brown 1997: 104). Brown also says: "After all, Colonel Mathieu had said he intended to be the 'toughest warlord on the hill' and this was one way to do it" (Worthington and Brown 1997: 100). Bercuson (1996: 233-234) tells us that the abuse of prisoners had already started in the camp, thus setting a dangerous precedent for what happened on March 16, 1993.

At first the Somalis who were captured while infiltrating the compound were simply bound, kept overnight at the base, then released to their clans or, when a local police force was eventually re-established, brought into town. This seemed to provide no deterrent, and some of the Canadian soldiers soon started to abuse some of the prisoners. Prisoners were blindfolded or gagged. Cloths or handkerchiefs were bound over their heads and doused with water. When the water dried, the cloth shrank, causing much pain. Trophy photos were taken in which Canadian soldiers posed with their captives. In the words of one officer, "The prisoners were increasingly treated as prisoners of war might have been in a brutal campaign."

On several days in January 1993, Somali detainees were kept in an open area in the sun, visible from the road, blindfolded and handcuffed with signs marked "thief" on them. Kyle Brown reports sadistic treatment of thieves by members of 2 Commando before March 16. When five teenagers were caught pilfering

The soldiers told them, through the interpreter, that they were going to exercise Islamic law and cut off their hands. A chosen victim was weeping and screaming for mercy as he was tied to a chair at a table while a soldier in front of him sharpened a machete. The interpreter repeated his fate. His pleas for mercy fell on deaf ears. The last thing the youth saw before being blindfolded and having his arm held securely on the table-cum-chopping block was the paratrooper with machete raised to strike. At the moment the machete crashed onto the table, missing the arm, a bucket of cold water was dumped on the blindfolded youth, who promptly fainted and defecated (Worthington and Brown 1997: 111).

Brown states that the sergeants understood that Maj Seward's "abuse" instructions prior to the events of March 16, 1993 meant "roughing up and harassing prisoners to deter them from coming back." Brown (Worthington and Brown 1997: 113) says: "This [roughing up] was being done anyway



unofficially, as an alternative to turning them over to local police who had neither the means nor the inclination to keep them in custody."

Another form of frustration was the inability to define clearly who the "enemy" was. Many interviewees compared this aspect of the Somalia deployment to Vietnam. In a letter home one Canadian soldier wrote: "Can't wait to get out of here. It's like Vietnam. You don't know who your enemy is" (James Steed, January 7, 1993).

*The threat was always there in the back of your mind. First few weeks, I felt threatened by all Somalis. Again, who's the enemy, who's the bad guy, who's the good guy? And remembering again the Vietnam experience where those Vietnamese were all friends and all of a sudden, they put a grenade in your Jeep.*

*Vietnam was a similar mission in that it was a not trustworthy enemy and you didn't know who was around that you could depend on. That part of the folklore of Vietnam that everybody is a suspected Vietcong, that was the similarity; that you didn't know if you could trust any of them. They might have guns or not. They can kill you if you turn your back on them.*

*Don't think anybody ever found out who "the enemy was." From what I read about Vietnam, it was a little like that. Everybody's Black of course. The Somalis have very distinct facial features. My first encounter with the land of Mogadishu — it's very hot. The Americans are there like something like a scene out of D-day or the movie The Longest Day. There were trucks and everything, setting up, tents everywhere, I've never seen so much equipment in my life. We took the last plane in. It was soon getting dark, so we had to get out of the airplane as soon as we could so the airplane could take off. There were Somalis all around the airfield. There was quite a few of us. My first encounter — you see those people in what you think at first are rags, which are actually their clothes. They look at you like you are from another world, you look at them like they are from another world. You wonder where in the world you are. It's incredibly hot, the plane is gone, and it's very quiet, dust everywhere. It's dark very soon and it's the end of my first day.*

An enemy may be defined as "a person or group of persons conceived as feeling hostility toward, or as representing a threat to do harm to, the perceiver" (Silverstein and Flamenbaum 1989: 52).

*I went into town on a patrol. The members of the patrol were very tense, because we didn't know who the bad guy was out there. Of course the Somalis were looking at us like we were from another world. Which we were. So that didn't help in easing tensions. Some of them didn't quite like us. Well, given the experience they had with the White man (the Italians) many years ago. White men were the oppressors. So there was a lot of tension, a lot of anxiety. Not knowing what to expect.*

The idea that anyone could be an "enemy" was reinforced from the beginning. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Handbook (DND 1992: 21) the CARBG group was given before deployment clearly states: "Always remember, yesterday's allies can turn on non-vigilant groups if it is in their interest and they can get away with it. This is an unfortunate aspect of trust-building in Somalia. Never let your guard down. Good luck!" Soldiers knew that things could get out of hand quickly.

*The problem I think that the soldiers had was that one minute it could be very, very calm, and then all of a sudden you have a riot on your hands. There was no indication that it was going to occur. I think that is very frightening when you don't know where it's coming from. OK if we're in Bosnia and we're facing the Serbs. Well that's a known enemy. I know what they're going to do. They are soldiers. I know how they hold their weapons. But when you got somebody whacked out on khat. You don't know how he is going to react. He's going to be braver than he thinks he is. But at the same time little kids were pretty good with the slings and the rocks. And that could kill you. You couldn't see that coming.*

Miller and Moskos (1995) noted confusion among the U.S. troops they surveyed in Somalia as to whom the actual belligerents were. In fact, anyone could be a potential threat. A U.S. soldier stated: "The hostile Somalian people did not wear uniforms or have any other identifying markers. There was no precise way to distinguish between the good and the bad people of Somalia" (Fair 1995: 6). The Auditorat général, Belgique (1993: Annexe E) described situations where Somalis disguised as women fired on Belgians. According to Lewis (1985: 88), an unidentifiable enemy can cause "a retreat from meaning."

*In some cases it's very difficult for soldiers to distinguish friend from foe. I mean are these people dangerous or aren't they? This is the kind of thing that goes on all the time. These are processes. And if you're out there all*

*by yourself at night. On sentry duty and somebody is trashing around grabbing things and you don't know. I mean just because a kid is four and a half feet tall it doesn't mean that he's not dangerous.*

*You couldn't trust the children either. They steal from you and throw rocks at you and who knows what else they're planning.*

Lewis (1985: 117) explains that a retreat from meaning is not anomie; it is identification with the smaller group for survival. In his study of Vietnam soldiers, he found that the squad, platoon, company served as the meaning-generating and meaning-maintaining apparatus of social process. The Commandos were strongly bonded and inclusive groups. Self-centredness was already a characteristic of the CAR. But it is also true that a less benign but well-known form of group narcissism is enemy-creation or hatred<sup>14</sup> of the out-group (see Peck 1983: 225). Ballard and McDowell (1991: 232) state that out groups are especially easy to hate if they have some distinguishing characteristic (skin colour or different culture, for example). Even non-Black<sup>15</sup> ethnic minorities in highly socialized units could end up adopting an attitude that Somalis were the "enemy." Although many soldiers said that you could not trust any Somali, from our interviews, there emerged a sense that there was one particular group of Somalis that was particularly dangerous: young adult males.

*I saw the open, naked aggression there of the young men, who formed in groups and encouraged the small kids to come out and throw rocks at us.*

*We knew that the women and kids were not the problem. We were there to help them. Even though the kids were throwing rocks at us, we knew who was making them do it. We were sure that it was a game. We were almost sure who was driving them to do it. 'Cause you could see the guys in the houses and you could see young Somali men grouped in corners as we were driving by. We knew they weren't talking about the weather. So the women and children we knew were not the problem.*

*You didn't know who your enemy was, he didn't wear a uniform. The kid between 7 and 23 years old was your enemy. They were brought up in the war and they pass it down to their siblings and friends and that was your enemy. One minute he could be as friendly as anything then turn the corner and lace you in the head with a rock.*

*But it's not the kids I didn't trust or the older people. Anybody over 12 and under 50 I had no use for.*

*They're really hypocrites. Someone who looks upright would go and tell the kids to throw rocks at us. It happened to me quite a lot. You know that it's not the kid's fault. There's someone else who told him to throw rocks. You can't trust anyone.*

The cultural context within which stress occurs serves to constrain, mould and channel the outcomes of that stress in particular directions. This influence occurs both through the socialization process, during which people are trained to deal with stress, tension and frustration in a culturally approved fashion, and through the situational norms that encourage, or at least tolerate, certain responses to stressful situations and disallow others (Linsky et al. 1995: 8). It has been observed (Schein 1961: 107) that under the stress of crisis the individual tends increasingly to perceive and judge in terms of "black and white" and to be increasingly unable to see the nuances of gray, a condition which makes the "black and white" kind of ideologies (such as found in military training) particularly effective for group cohesion in battle. "Combat sets up a black/white antagonism between 'own' and 'other' that requires absolute loyalty and devotion toward own and completely reverse orientations toward no other" (Harrison and Laliberté 1994: 34). *I think that with Canadian and Somalis, you can't help but be divided into "us" and "them" because we are different.* So, in a highly stressed environment and with leaders giving mixed messages about aggressive behaviour, perspective can be lost and extreme attitudes adopted.

*Even the video taken in Somalia where you see a soldier with a big machine gun, and "operation kill-niggers" I think he was saying — that was taken out of context. There was one operation of the tour where 2 Commando was supposed to go hut to hut and hunt for weapons and bad people. Of course you're going out there, you don't know who's on the other side of the hut. It might be the enemy. You might be killed. So you have to psyche yourself up. Part of the video was shot right then, when people were getting psyched up.*

Now, if I was going to shoot one, I was going to say well, "I'm going to kill this nigger". I got to say that in my head. I can't say, well, "I'm going to kill this nice guy". You can't do that, so, if these people use that in that [con]text,



well, you know...it's a way I guess of pumping themselves up, or whatever. I could not picture myself shooting someone I like or knew, you know what I am saying, so if I have to build up some sort of hatred for these people, I have to use their colour for it, then, I guess, that's what I'm going to have to do (Testimony of Pte Grant BOI Vol. IV: 864-889).

#### HUMANITARIANS OR WARRIORS?

The Canadians were to pursue a “hearts and minds” approach in Somalia of establishing a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid and assisting in the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure so progress could be sustained once the UNITAF forces had departed. However a “hearts and minds” strategy was full of contradictions — the need to create a secure environment through search operations, weapons seizures, roadblocks, etc. and a rebuilding campaign in collaboration with the local population. The soldiers felt the contradictions.

*It's a deep, personal dilemma. We all wanted to go to Somalia, not just to go to war. We would have hoped to go into battle, but, it's very simple, we wanted to go bring food to the good guys and kill the bad guys. That's about it. If it had only been that simple, once we got there. They're all Black, who's who? They all look alike. Who's our friends, who's the enemy?*

Our interviews reflect differing perceptions of Somali citizens among soldiers. For example, some felt that the stealing was an act of desperation or a strategy adopted by people who had nothing. Others felt that the Somalis were deceptive, cunning and self-interested. *We all went to Somalia with good intentions, but once we got there, we were utterly discouraged.* The study conducted among American troops in Somalia also showed this divergence of attitudes:

Two divergent, even opposite patterns appeared. One pattern reflected a “warrior strategy”, in which soldiers generalized the behaviour of the gunmen and rioters to all Somalis and treated the entire population as potential enemies. The other pattern was based on a “humanitarian strategy”: soldiers following this pattern were offended by negative stereotypes of Somalis, eschewed the use of force, and sought to contextualize Somali behaviour by seeking cultural and political explanations (Miller and Moskos 1995: 617-618).

Canadians carried out a number of good works in Somalia — mine fields were cleared, bridges rebuilt, as were the police station, the hospital and the school in Matabaan. The jail was repaired in Belet Huen and the police were trained. Local wells, the windmill and generator were all repaired. Medical personnel worked with the local population treating the sick and teaching first aid. What is interesting to note is that the majority of this work was initiated and carried out by the non-combat personnel which supports the findings of Miller and Moskos (1995: 633) that intensively trained combat soldiers were less likely to adopt humanitarian attitudes toward the local population. This is not to say that the categories are closed. Maj Magee described to the BOI how his soldiers gave medical assistance to victims of a truck crash. Many soldiers interviewed expressed what might be described as humanitarian values toward the Somalis.

*Interactions were discouraged to the point of threats of fines and jail. If you were caught giving a candy, a bottle of water, or anything to the Somali locals, you would be fined or jailed. It just depended on who caught you. That's not to say it wasn't done. Now some of that's because they didn't want people throwing candy to kids out of moving vehicles, because the kids will run right in front of a vehicle, but also you weren't allowed to throw food and stuff over the wire to them, but people often did. I gave plenty of food and clothing too.*

*There were young kids about 8, 10 years old crawling through the barb wire to steal jerrycans and the guys were scared they were going to hurt themselves on the razor wire, so they started throwing them jerrycans of fuel so they wouldn't crawl through. I said: "We put the wire up for a reason. You're not suppose to throw the cans over." Stuff like that went on. But you had to be really careful what you did because you would get in a lot of trouble if you were caught.*

*I had my candies and those little Canadian flags — which the government doesn't give, we have to buy them — to give to the kids.*

Some soldiers described how they handed food over the wire to Somalis on the other side of the fence. It is possible that mixed messages from different camps actually encouraged stealing. What is the difference between having someone hand an object to you over the wire and getting it yourself? As one soldier remarked: *In the beginning we gave them everything. That may have encouraged them to keep coming into camp and taking more.*

Miller and Moskos (1995: 633) state that the warrior strategy was more likely to be adopted by men, Whites, and combat soldiers "who were trained intensively to operate against a foreign enemy." For example, the Belgian paratroops (predominantly male and White) lost some of their enthusiasm for the Somalis as the mission progressed and eventually ended up executing their work without any sympathy nor compassion for Somalis (Auditorat général, Belgique 1993: 11). LCol Mathieu noted that 2 Commando was conducting its work in an overly aggressive manner and, as early as January 16, 1993, a reproof was issued to Maj Seward disciplining him for permitting his Commando to act aggressively toward the local population. Maj Seward recorded his reaction to this reproof in his diary. "If I hear any more hearts and minds bullshit, I'm going to fucking barf."

Empathy and aggression are inversely proportionate according to some studies. Combat soldiers are usually encouraged to hate "the enemy." This is a technique used to motivate them in combat. Empathy for the enemy is actively discouraged. What is unfortunate is how some Canadian soldiers came to perceive Somalis as the enemy. Enemy image leads people to focus attention on and to remember the negative and threatening characteristics of an enemy rather than on positive and peaceful characteristics (Silverstein and Flamenbaum 1989: 53).

*I think the Airborne probably fell into a survival mode. The land itself makes you believe that. It is a hostile, hard, unforgiving, horrible place. It's like no place on earth and when you drive around it and you see the devastation and the human suffering, the guys say to themselves: "It's survival time." With the people's behaviour initially, and the climate and everything else, I think those guys very quickly got themselves into a survival mentality, thinking: "We got to look after ourselves here. Then once we're secure and looking after ourselves we'll help these poor bastards." I'm sure that is a very plausible situation as to why the guys got into the mode they did.*

*The mind set changed while we were there to a survivalist's situation. As a result of some badly timed or badly directed order, layered over that mentality, the troops started to do things that the structure was not prepared to deal with.*

In the U.S. study, women and Black American soldiers were more likely to adopt humanitarian strategies rather than warrior attitudes. This work

parallels our own findings which show that people in Service Commando (non-combat medical personnel) tended to adopt a humanitarian approach while the elite Airborne combat unit, particularly 2 Commando, was invested in a warrior identity which led some of them to perceive Somalis as the enemy. This division echos the opposing value systems described in previous chapters about occupational versus institutional values.

One strategy for making sense of the situation was to construct negative stereotypes of Somalis and perceive them as the enemy. This strategy was adopted most easily by soldiers in combat MOSs [military occupational specialties], who are exclusively male by policy and predominantly white (more than 70% by assignment). Their particular, intense training prepares them more fully for combat missions against a foreign enemy than does general training of support soldiers.

Soldiers adopting the warrior response characterized the locals as lazy and uncivilized people who prefer a lifestyle of gunfire, drugs, and the resulting poverty. Even though the great majority of Somalis were not gunmen, such generalizing eased the tension of not knowing who was an enemy. The perception that providing aid only contributed to the Somalis' laziness was apparent in comments such as, "They're all just sitting around waiting for a handout". These soldiers did not believe that clan rivalry was a legitimate reason for the Somalis to inflict violence and starvation on one another. They felt the conditions in Somalia were the fault of the people themselves, because they chose not to work, to use the drug Khat and to fight among themselves for no apparently good reason. Even so, the soldiers did not invent a pejorative term for Somalis. As one informant put it, "Somali is bad enough" (Miller and Moskos 1995: 625).

Canadians did invent a pejorative term for Somalis "smoofities" or "smuffy" which no interviewee seemed to know the meaning of. There is also the video record of members of 2 Commando calling the Somalis "niggers."<sup>16</sup> Canadian Forces members also called the Somalis "nig nog," "nègre," "jigaboo," "moolie," "flip-flop," "Shomalians" and "gimmies" which refers to their annoyance with Somali beggars. Canadians also purchased a commemorative T-shirt with an outstretched Somali hand and the word "gimme" on it.

*The biggest problem was the "gimme, gimme, water" or whatever. There would always be someone, even standing on the side of the road, people*



*just standing there saying "gimme, gimme, gimme." Men women and children. I don't know if all Somalis do that, but those in Belet Huen did. And it was irritating to North Americans. One individual bought a T-shirt from the Americans that said "Tss Tss gimme water." I don't know where they got it. But that was a constant thing. Not just poor people, but people who were not starving. Like I said starving was all very subjective. I became, I would say, intolerant. There was nothing you could do or give to them to stop the begging, nothing.*

*They were called "gimmes." It was just grinding, grinding, grinding, every day. Everywhere you went, they grabbed and touched, you know you'd have "Gimme sir."*

*There were labels and degrading names like "niggers," and "nig-nogs" for the Somalis. One of the officers called them "Somolians." He could clearly say the word Somali, but he said "Somolians."*

*They were called thieves, looters, not Somali harvesters picking up things, not recyclers but looters. A lot of Somali behaviour was classed as looting, which I think is a derogatory assumption. They were dirty and looters, these are the two concepts that seemed to be understood by the Airborne soldiers.*

*They were dirty, they were idiots, they were looters, that was the kind of expression people used for the Somalis.*

*I remember early on in camp, a lot of soldiers would call the Somalis funny names, and laugh at them, etc., etc.... It was never words like "nigger," I'd remember that. One of the names that was very frequently used was "smuffy." Whatever that means. But people were mostly making fun of the Somalis' working habits, the way they dressed, and calling them names and stuff like that.*

*People would refer to Somalis as "smufties." I guess it's a smurf take-off. They called them rags, too, like ragheads in the Arab world.*

*For example, the kids used to run behind us to pick up an empty water bottle that we'd throw away. Well, one guy tied a stick to a bottle once so he could pull it away whenever the kids tried to grab it.*



Soldier with Somali children

*Some guys bought some stuff off some kids with Canadian Tire money.*

*"Do not trust a fat Somali." Isn't that terrible. But what happened was that a lot of the food that was meant for displaced people was stolen. Bandits even made armed raids on warehouses. Where did that food go? "Do not trust a fat Somali" was a bad attitude but I tell you it was true.<sup>17</sup>*

*The people in this village are definitely not hungry. But they know how to beg. We can't get a moment's peace from these people; they are driving the troops crazy. You can tell who the bandits are because they dress better than the sticky villagers (letter home).*

Racist comments show a lack of empathy for the Somalis.<sup>18</sup> Sometimes interactions were explained away by soldiers. For example Kyle Brown tells us that "violence is an everyday experience." Somali police and militia made their point by hitting people. "It's part of their culture, and a language they understand" (Worthington and Brown 1997: 123). Similarly, Cpl Sprenger testified to the BOI (Vol. V: 1165-1185).

Somalis, in general, are very very aggressive and sometimes when you had to do crowd control you had to be aggressive, you had to have an aggressive attitude or else they'd walk all over you and you wouldn't gain their respect and something serious might happen because Somalis respect power, they respect aggressiveness and if you're aggressive then you'll deal with them a lot better than if you try to sweet talk them.

Some of my interviewees were quick to tell me that other UNITAF contingents were just as bad or worse in their treatment of Somalis, as if that fact made Canadian behaviour OK. *Everyone was beating on the Somalis.* Other reasons were found for mistreatment — boredom, frustration, short tempers, etc.

*I heard people talking about taunting kids by putting water bottles on sticks and when the kids jumped for them the guy would pull them away. Which to me is very cruel. Very, very cruel. Quite a bit of cruel things, not big things, but cruel things went on. But again, I would relate that to the boredom and frustration.*

*Basically everybody beat up on the Somalis. Everybody did. All of the nations that were there.*

*At first everybody felt bad about the begging so even though we were told not to give them anything, there were still people giving them stuff. They would show up at 6 in the morning and they'd squat right in front of you and all day long it'd be the same thing asking for water and food and they'd leave at 6 o'clock at night. Twelve hours of pst pst all day long and after a while your nerves wore thin. I imagine sometimes the temper flared quickly.*

*One guy used to get the day-old bread from the cook and feed it to the kids. The cook was just going to throw it out anyway. So everyday there'd be about 500 kids all standing out there and getting 50 buns. But after he threw it over the fence he'd leave, but the kids would stick around. They wanted jugs, they wanted water, they wanted food. And I wasn't going to give them my food, my water. I mean this is what I got. But all they got was buns and there'd be 250 kids sitting there looking at you for four hours going "ug ug." Finally you get bitter 'cause you can't do anything. You get rocks and you start whipping at 'em to get them to go away.*

Barber (1972: 163) says it is untrue that exposure to foreign cultures breeds tolerance and understanding. "Beyond the well-known fact that servicemen serving abroad almost invariably adopt derogatory slang terms to describe any foreigners with whom they come in regular contact, there is also some scholarly evidence to the effect that foreign service is more likely to reinforce parochialism than it is to 'broaden understanding.'" In a new cultural setting, we attribute meaning and purpose to all aspects of the setting, possibly even exaggerating the degree to which the setting actually reflects clear intent on the part of participants (Schein 1985: 29). In short, there is a tendency for over projection, where the negative or threatening characteristics of the out group can become exaggerated.

Once people perceive an individual or a group as hostile or threatening ie. as an "enemy", biases enter their processing of information in regard to the actions of that individual or group. These biases may affect any phase of social information processing, including attention, encoding, memory, assessment of credibility, evaluation of hostility, expectation of future action and attribution (Silverstein and Flamenbaum 1989: 51).

#### CONCLUSIONS: CUMULATIVE STRESS

If we return to the death of Shidane Arone in March 1993, we can observe many factors at play. What is significant for this study is that the order to



abuse prisoners that evening was an event which caused everything else to line up — like the drop that makes the glass overflow.

*So for an order, treat them a little rough and they'll respond. The tougher we look the better respect we'll get. You can only play that so far. What you do is you up the anti each time. Okay we're the toughest sons of bitches here now and anybody that crosses this line is history.*

*I know when the murder happened, tensions were very high. "We're going to sort them out, we're going to teach them a lesson."*

The drop of water that makes the glass overflow plays the role which the closure element plays in Gestalt psychology. This is the element which *organizes*, in a practically irreversible manner, the ensemble of significant and pertinent previous stimuli, and attributes to them a stable meaning (Devereux 1978: 54). Similarly, social learning theory points out that the role of the environment goes far beyond providing immediate role models and reinforcement for aggression. "Patterns of behavior can be stored cognitively and only acted on at a much later date when external conditions are conducive" (Miedzian 1991: 63).

The closure element co-ordinates significant and pertinent previous stimuli, thereby constituting a structure which is henceforth capable of being mobilized in its totality whereas previously it could only be mobilized in a fractional manner. The principal effect of this consolidation is precisely the capacity of an objectively minimal impact to set in motion a mass reaction which, according to Devereux (1978: 119) is an endogenous occurrence, even though it is, in appearance, triggered by the drop. Indeed, the great action potential of the drop dwells not in that drop of water itself but in the already accumulated material, which it organizes and saturates until a critical mass is attained.

What matters from the viewpoint of the magnitude of this reaction is, thus, not the simply additive - though perhaps delayed - manifestation of the countless earlier drops; what does matter is precisely the organization of these (previously isolated) drops into a structured "atomic pile", which having attained a critical mass, is capable of producing and of maintaining a chain reaction (Devereux 1978: 55).

It is my belief that the order to abuse prisoners given by the officer commanding 2 Commando on March 16th, 1993 was such a closure element.

It caused everything to line up — the frustration from the heat, dust, food, living conditions, insults and stealing by Somalis, and particularly the rebel image and the hyper investment in aggressivity found in 2 Commando. This combined with excessive alcohol (and perhaps other drug) consumption resulted in an explosive cocktail.

*These situations, such as we find in Somalia, are the ones where if you do have weaknesses within a unit, they will erupt. You can almost guarantee that the aberrations would come out in that kind of an environment because of the stresses and strains experienced by the troops. In Somalia, you had heat, dirt, hard rations, uncertain boundaries. And, you had difficulty identifying friend from foe. A soldier sees a kid. But the kid comes in and steals from the unit. There's a tendency for soldiers to deal in a black and white world. In fact, a lot of the training is sort of directed that way. In other words, soldiers may not look at things in their full complexity, but rather try to find some simple, short-hand way of making identifications, in order to deal with them. So, here you have a tremendously complex situation where things are extremely unclear and you get a bunch of young soldiers who are thrust into this situation where they suffer deprivation, stress, frustration, provocation, fear, etc. If you came from some other country you might not find it as stressful. But, by the high North American standard, the peacekeeping situation is extremely uncomfortable, ambiguous and uncertain. This creates stress, frustration and anxiety. In this situation, a special type of leadership is required. I call this the "management of uncertainty and frustration." Some leaders do it well, others poorly.<sup>19</sup>*

When constant alertness is demanded in an ambiguous situation without a clearly defined enemy, emotional pressures build up. As Farley's 1995 study of Canadian peacekeepers shows, stress is cumulative. A soldier's goal is to fight the enemy. However, in Somalia it was difficult to determine who exactly the enemy was. Guenter Lewy (1980: 158) studied Americans in Vietnam and concluded that "aggressive behaviour is often the result of frustrations and anxiety.... Gradually the entire Vietnamese population became an object of fear and hatred." Similarly, Lewis (1985: 103-104) believes that "the American soldier in Vietnam committed atrocities because the enemy remained unavailable as an object upon which to unleash violent energies." Rage then looks for an available outlet. Shidane Arone was just such an outlet.

*Somalia was not an ordinary scene. It was a panic scene. It was a war. And what happened, it's bad. But it would have probably happened to anybody in that situation. They were nervous. And they beat up the guy and he died. Well unfortunately he died. They were afraid, scared, and we sent them into a nowhere zone. Can you imagine you're twenty years old. No experience at all. You think you joined the forces because it's good. You got paid every two weeks, good food, lots of girls. You can have fun because it's like a family. Because in civilian life it's hard to make friends. But in the military it's easy. You live with the same guys in barracks and you create a kind of family with them. You share everything. And next thing you know they send you somewhere. Actually they send you to nowhere, they give you a weapon and say you cannot shoot, do nothing. It's hard. You don't sleep well. You sleep with one eye open. That can get on your nerves. In Somalia and all the other places like that, they're not playing. When they shoot it's real bullets. You wake up and say to yourself: "Well, we're in Africa but it's not as great as I thought. What am I doing here?" And the first thing you know somebody has beat up a prisoner. It's all your pent up anger and frustration that wants to get out. So you start to beat somebody and at one point you don't want to stop. That's probably what happened. They started to beat him up and all the rage came out and they couldn't stop until he died.*





## *Conclusions*

*Modern militaries are inherently incapable of taking or being used for proactive preventative action. Because of their size, composition, equipage and destructive orientation, they are an inherently reactive instrument that can only be used to deal with situations we don't want at a stage where such situations are largely beyond effective, affordable control.*

Dr. Gregory Foster (1997)

Is the purpose of the Canadian military to prosecute war or is it to preserve peace? Some might argue that the only way to preserve the peace is by being willing and able to wage war. The purpose of the final section of our study is not to debate this issue, rather it is to remind the reader that the purpose of the military will ultimately define and determine its culture, that is, the way it does business.

### INVESTED IDENTITIES

In the first chapter we examined the characteristics of traditional military organizations. The core of the traditional system is the discipline of mind, body and emotions in the preparation for combat. According to the professional code of honour, duty comes before individual goals, desires and interests. We then went on to describe system-wide changes in the Canadian military which have led to the emergence of a new type of military man — one that is more concerned with individual career opportunities rather than commitment to the military institution. Loyalty in this case depends more on the conditions of employment than commitment to service.

We reviewed the original work on these trends which were first

described and documented by American researchers such as Janowitz, Moskos and Segal. It was Moskos who developed what came to be known as the institutional/occupational model which describes "a continuum ranging from a military organization highly divergent from civilian society to one highly convergent with civilian structures" (Moskos 1988: 57). The divergent military organization has institutional characteristics of total service to country while the convergent military sees service as another employment opportunity. In Canada, Cotton (1981: 100) noted the decline of the traditional notion of military service as a calling or vocation. What was significant for our work was the observation that both institutional and occupational values could co-exist in the same military establishment.

This theme was elaborated on in another Canadian study (Cotton et al. 1978) which examined the significant changes brought about by the 1966 decision to reduce, unify and functionally integrate the three Canadian military services. The administrative changes, designed to make the Canadian Forces (CF) more efficient and cost effective, included a centralized career management system "which emphasized skills, occupations and military positions as administrative tools rather than loci of commitment and cohesion" (Cotton et al. 1978: 370). What is important to note is that while the administrative and support sectors of the CF were becoming more managerial and convergent with civilian society, the land and sea operations — the combat divisions — were remaining divergent. Thus, the authors noted that Canadian military was becoming pluralistic and heterogenous, with combat units, such as the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR), maintaining their distinctive mores of recruitment and socialization along with different normative and symbolic systems (Cotton et al. 1978: 383-384). Because of the unevenness of change in the CF, traditional military values can come into conflict with occupational trends. Thus, in peacetime armies, the ground combat soldier can feel alienated and surrounded by paper pushers and bureaucrats-in-uniform who do not share his warrior values (Cotton and Pinch 1986: 243).

In the next chapter we described the different normative and symbolic systems of the Canadian army. In examining regimental culture we saw how emphasis was placed on group solidarity and cohesion. As J.C.T. Downey (1977: 62) has written: "An armed force is a body of men organized to achieve its ends irresistibly by coordinated action. Cohesion is therefore the essence of its being." If the organization is to succeed in battle, cohesion must be encouraged at all levels, from commitment to defend the nation, to

commitment to defend one's buddies under fire. However, exaggerated unit loyalty can lead to dysfunctional behaviour by unit members. We have seen in Chapter 3 how bonds of loyalty can lead members of a regiment or members of smaller units, such as commandos, to protect each other, sometimes by covering up for each other or by setting up walls of silence. Unit pride can become so exaggerated that one only respects the members of one's unit, ignoring and sometimes resenting those outside the group. What is clearly an effective and necessary attitude for the battlefield can then become an exaggerated force which undermines good order and discipline. We have called this force "hyper investment."

This term was developed by George Devereux in the 1970s to describe the impact of group identity upon the individual. According to Devereux (1978: 162) an individual acquires several group identities throughout his or her lifetime. For example, I am a woman, an anthropologist, born in Canada, with a father who was Protestant, of British origin, etc. Although I share some of these identities with other members of society, the total selection of groups constitutes my uniqueness, that is, no other person will have the same pattern of groups that I have. When an individual becomes "hyper invested" in one group identity then this group identity takes up "more place" in an individual's total pattern of identities. The other aspects of the individual are then at risk of being subordinated to this dominant identity and the individual loses his or her uniqueness as it is subsumed by one particular group identity.

We have seen that military socialization encourages deindividualization by focusing attention outward, on the group rather than on oneself, thus achieving unity and cohesion. This is because in a combat environment, an unintegrated individual might not only be a danger to himself but a threat to group effectiveness and ultimately group survival. Thus, primary group cohesion promotes motivation and appropriate behaviour in combat.<sup>1</sup> However, intra-group bonding carries with it the danger of creating a *we/they* dichotomy. Aldous Huxley once wrote: "Loyalty to organization A always entails some degree of suspicion, contempt, or downright loathing of organizations B, C, D, and all the rest" (quoted in Kellett nd). Essentially, as one becomes progressively invested in one identity, one loses the ability to relate to those outside the group who do not share that identity. Again, it depends on which identity is being encouraged. In a combat unit with an emphasis on the warrior identity, this might lead to an ever-widening gap with civilian society. In the army, this might lead to disrespect for other branches of the military who

are not part of the in-group. In a regimental system, this might lead to increased isolation from and disdain for other regiments. Thus, some members of the CAR did not respect "legs" and sometimes refused to even salute officers from other regiments. Another result is that supervisors became too inward looking, being only concerned with discipline in their own unit, thus ignoring possible breakdowns in other units.

In Chapter 4 we saw that even though the CAR were "technically" not an elite unit of the CF, members perceived themselves to be elite and behaved accordingly. Military elites are particularly likely to develop powerful in-group/out-group attitudes. We also observed just how inclusive the three commando units were. Through the structure of the Airborne itself, divided along the parent regimental affiliations, strong in-group identity was allowed to develop, sometimes unchecked. Thus sub-unit individuality was created and reinforced with little mixing among sub-units. This led to an emphasis on sub-unit solidarity at the expense of regimental and army cohesion. This fracturing is particularly important in the case of elements of 2 Commando which became progressively invested in a "rebel" identity.

In Chapter 5 we observed that Somali clan society is also an inclusive society, that is, it rejects outsiders. The sense of social solidarity created by the kinship system means that those outside the system are considered as socially inferior. Non-Somalis, particularly foreigners, are looked down on and regarded with suspicion because they are not bound by rules of reciprocal rights and contractual trust based on descent and kinship. Thus the Somalis had an in-group/out-group attitude which was not unlike that of the Airborne. When the soldiers arrived in theatre, they were rejected as *gallo* (infidel, outsider).

In Chapter 6 we looked at the social organization and physical and psychological stressors associated with the peace-making mission to Somalia. The stressors our interviewees identified included the environmental demands linked to the extreme heat and inadequate living conditions they faced (shortage of water, hard rations for six months, etc.), poor communication with home, training which did not prepare them for what they were about to encounter, fear of physical danger from an "enemy" which was not clearly identifiable, boredom, loneliness and frustration.



## THE DEATH OF SHIDANE ARONE

We began our study asking if it was possible to explain what occurred on the eve of March 16, 1993 when Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown allegedly tortured and beat Shidane Arone. Bendfeldt-Zachrisson's (1985) research describes the mental preparation for torture which is done by emphasizing the "non-humanness" of target groups who are seen as a threat to the common good and by education that emphasizes loyalty to an organization that will protect the individual and maintain secrecy. We have seen how infiltrators were regarded as a serious threat to security by some members of the Airborne. Kellman (1995: 21) writes that torturers believe they are engaged in some higher purpose and they come to see themselves as playing an important role in the protection of the common good. Certainly, some members of the Airborne believed that Somali infiltrators needed to be taught a lesson so they would stop coming into the Canadian camp.

Somalis were dehumanized through the use of such derogatory terminology as "smufty," "nig nog," etc. According to Kellman (1989: 19) labels help deprive the victim of identity.<sup>2</sup> Kellman (1989: 15) also tells us that there is a relationship between frustration and aggression. Situationally induced frustration toward the target contributes heavily to violence, but it does so largely by dehumanizing the victim. "Through dehumanization, the actors' attitudes toward the target and toward themselves become so structured that it is neither necessary nor possible for them to view the relationship in moral terms." Similarly, Crelinsten and Schmid (1995: 9) observe that "the dehumanization of the out-group" is one of the conditions under which torture is likely to occur. Kellman also states that "the main source of dehumanization of the victims is their designation as enemies..." (1995: 31). Grossman (1995: 160) has described the emotional distance necessary for torture to occur and has listed levels of emotional withdrawal which include cultural distance (racial and ethnic difference which permit the killer to dehumanize the victim) and moral distance (the intense belief in moral superiority and in the rightness of vengeful action).<sup>3</sup>

In terms of the final criteria above (education that emphasizes loyalty to an organization that will protect the individual and maintain secrecy) we observed in Chapter 4 a 2 Commando subculture which was hyperinvested in an aggressive rebel identity with strong antipathy for out-groups. In addition to fierce commando loyalty, there was a tradition of protecting each other, which was encouraged by the regimental system. At CFB

Petawawa, in-group loyalty was so strong that authorities were unable to find out who had participated in the car burning incidents. Investigations only encountered a wall of silence concerning a serious breach of discipline. By assuring anonymity through norms of group loyalty, acts of subversion and defiance were facilitated. It would also seem that the mistreatment of Somali prisoners had occurred earlier, prior to March 16th, and these acts had not been sanctioned. Although impossible to know, Clayton Matchee might have felt that he was operating in a permissive atmosphere where his acts were somehow "unofficially" approved. It seems clear that some members of 2 Commando believed that it was OK to beat up a Somali infiltrator in order to teach him a lesson.

We also have to remember that the eve of March 16th was the beginning of the regimental birthday party for the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI). Members of 2 Commando seemed to be in a party mood, which is a more permissive atmosphere and alcohol was flowing. From testimony to the Board of Inquiry and court-martial hearings it is clear that Clayton Matchee had consumed much more than his two beers per day. As we have argued earlier, alcohol does not necessarily relieve tension; in fact, it can be a catalyst in a very "lethal" mix.

If all the factors described in this study contributed to the events of March 16th, why did some members of the Airborne behave as humanitarians and quiet professionals and others not? We have seen that hyperinvestment in a group identity leads to strong in-group/out-group tendencies which in turn can be expressed in varying forms of aggression. Nevertheless, it is important to note that strong group identification can be offset by discipline and leadership. Thus, a truly elite unit with a strong sense of professionalism and discipline would, in fact, be less likely to commit aggressive acts against members of the out-group. This is because the individuals are invested in an identity which has components of self-discipline and ethics embedded in it. In the best of all worlds, Canadian military ethos prescribes this self-discipline and ethical code for all soldiers and officers. Nevertheless, personal discipline, self-control and commitment to high standards of personal conduct need to be continually reinforced. The cultivation of aggressive behaviour needs to be balanced with respect for authority and the rule of law. Priorities need to be clearly established within the regimental collective and within individual units so a healthy balance of loyalties is firmly established. The role of leadership in this is clear. "Leaders are the primary agents by which an organization's culture and role norms are modelled, transmitted, and maintained" (Schein 1985).

## SHOULD COMBAT SOLDIERS BE PEACEKEEPERS?

We should keep in mind that the mission to Somalia was not a peacekeeping mission but rather a peace-making mission, that is, an operation other than war which is closer to war than a Chapter VI United Nations peacekeeping mission. There is, however, a heated debate among military professionals and academics about the suitability of combat troops for peacekeeping.

Peacekeeping is an effort to stop two countries from fighting one another. By putting military men between military men there is a certain understanding among people in uniform of what the code of conduct is. If I give my word it will be recognized and respected by my counterparts on the other side. Not to say that civilians don't have that. The discipline is recognized. They know you have the weapons and you know how to use them too. Peacekeeping is really a military thing (Col LeClerc April 20, 1995, meeting with the Judge Advocate General, Ottawa).

The Board of Inquiry also thought that combat training for Somalia was sufficient to perform peace-making duties in Belet Huen. "The Board found that the Battle Group was very well-trained for its eventual task in Belet Huen because of its general purpose combat capability, the previous training for the contingency task in the Western Sahara, and the comprehensive training it underwent in Petawawa in the fall" (BOI Vol. XI Annex E 1993: 6).

Yet some feel that combat training is not enough. For example, while the military feels that the law of war is enough, Amnesty International maintains that special training is needed to complete its readiness for police duties. "If troops are to carry these policing functions [of arrest, detention, investigation and prosecution] they must abide by and be trained in international standards of policing rather than the practices of war" (Amnesty International cited in Noone 1995: 13). An interesting anecdote related to the author by U.S. military sociologist David Segal describes the different attitudes toward civilians that military and police personnel can have. In describing comments by U.S. infantry soldiers stationed in Somalia, Dr. Segal said that they felt they were less capable than military police of performing certain functions. According to Segal one soldier said: "We're trained to enter a room and spray it with gunfire, but police are not. When we caught incoming fire, our inclination was to suppress it and let the civilians worry about getting out of



the way. The MPs [military police] were more concerned about civilian casualties" (Segal, personal communication July 1995).

In general, combat units, such as the CAR, have always resisted the constabulary role. When Janowitz (1960) proposed a constabulary model for American soldiers he did remark that the professional soldiers would resist identifying themselves with police-like duties: "[T]he military tends to think of police activities as less prestigious and less honorable tasks" (Janowitz quoted in Miller 1995: 4). One of the interviewees also had very clear ideas about the difference between the police and the military.

*Liabilities as well are different for the police and the military. The police, of course, are liable under the Criminal Code for their actions, whereas, in war, the soldier is liable under the Law of War which, although it concerns individual behaviour, it is also individual behaviour in a group. It would be almost impossible to conduct a war if every individual soldier was faced with the same restrictions as the police, or the Criminal Code restrictions on the use of violence. The soldier would have to question himself endlessly if he applied the minimum force, did he shoot to kill or shoot to maim, and that kind of stuff. Questions that indeed soldiers have got to ask themselves when they are in aid to the civil power. So that's the difference. When you're looking at problems in the police, or in problems in the military, they have a similarity in that both deal with very unpleasant facets of existence — violence. But they come at it from very different ways, and are controlled in different ways. The individual policeman has got to have a very good understanding of charges, Criminal Code, that kind of stuff. Whereas what you require of a soldier is that he has discipline in handling his weapon. He doesn't need to have that much individual understanding of the grand principles of why he goes to war.*

According to Grimshaw (1995: 9) "the public thinks about clean-cut, fresh-faced stalwart young Canadians representing Canada abroad and doing good." Soldiers, especially infantry soldiers, "tend to think of themselves in a rather more traditional image, of people whose fundamental job is to close with and destroy the enemy." However, an enemy mind set can affect a combat soldier's evaluation of a situation and thus, heighten tension. Canadian combat soldiers have resisted the transition from institutional to occupational. Cotton (1979: 16) noted antipathy from the experienced combat soldier toward the shift in military life from being a vocation to simply another occupation. One can expect even more resistance to constabulary values.



In his observations of the 10th Mountain Division on peace duties in the Sinai, Segal (1995b: 8) noted that “the active duty soldier in the 10th Mountain seem to have a more martial and somewhat less pacific view of peacekeeping than do the soldiers in the composite [unit], most of whom were from the National Guard.” Segal’s data shows that soldiers did not “gleefully embrace” the peacekeeping role. “Most soldiers in the two units we studied do not believe that peacekeeping missions are appropriate for their units, or that peacekeeping assignments are good for their careers. To be fair, neither did they believe peacekeeping was for civilians. Most soldiers reject the notions of unarmed peace keepers, or of peacekeeping being done by civilians” (Segal 1995b: 12).

*Peacekeeping is a military function. It is not the boy scouts, not missionary work. It's situations where you encounter people who are armed, encounter lands which in many cases have been mined. So you have to know these things. You have to know how to use your weapon.*

Similarly, many traditionalists believe that the constabulary role is potentially dangerous since it puts emphasis on police-like duties at the expense of conventional military preparedness (Parker 1995: 72). A previous commander of the Canadian army, LGen (ret) Gervais said: “The Army must be a fighting force” (quoted in Parker 1995: 92). These men believe that it is best to train for war and scale down for a peace mission accordingly. This brings us back to the question posed at the beginning of this chapter: Is the purpose of the Canadian military to prosecute war or is it to preserve peace? The way one goes about the business of training for an overseas mission will be, in part, determined by the answer to this question.

Studies of the Canadian Forces in the 1990s suggest incompatibilities between conventional war and peace requirements (Eyre 1993, Pinch 1994a). This research shows that combat-trained officers and soldiers require additional non-conventional or special skills and knowledge to be suitably equipped for peace operations, as well as a re-orientation in the use of conventional combat skills.<sup>4</sup> Studies of European peacekeeping forces arrive at the same conclusions. For example, Johansson’s (1995: 14) work with Swedish peacekeepers in Bosnia concludes that the preparation and training needs include the tools/knowledge to understand and to deal with situations, rather than traditional military skills or aspects of leadership.<sup>5</sup> This is because soldiers are asked to evaluate and make decisions in peace missions that they would not traditionally be asked to make.

Structural conditions and the ambiguity of recent peacekeeping missions have tended to push some of the decision making down to the individual level. In the absence of policy that can apply to the incredible range of circumstances a soldier might encounter, the common soldier's personal interpretations of the situation sometimes become at least temporary policy. For this reason, soldiers' assessments of their mission and their roles can be critical (Miller 1995: 9).

Can training be added on in the couple of months or weeks before a mission or should peace training begin in basic training and continue as a seamless web throughout a soldier's career? Certainly, this will depend on what Canada decides the major role for the CF will be in the future.

Even though the death of Shidane Arone was the result of the actions of a few, it is simplistic to reduce what happened in March 1993 to the explanation that it was the work of "a few bad apples." Peace missions (like war) occur in extremely complex environments where any number of factors are at play. It is our belief that what happened in Somalia was the result of cumulative impact, that is, a mixture and accumulation of several factors — poor discipline, alcohol consumption, hyper-investment in a rebel warrior identity, a vision of Somalis as "the enemy," environmental and psychological stress, and poor leadership — which, when found in combination with each other led to a tragic death. The difficulty in identifying cumulative impact is that no one factor in and of itself may be enough to alert authorities to the danger. One might discipline soldiers for excessive drinking but excuse it as "boys will be boys." One might notice a breakdown of dress codes when soldiers sport bandanas and knives but ignore it as something small instead of seeing it as an indicator of emerging "Ramboism." We have attempted to explain the events of March 1993 from a socio-cultural perspective and found that the roots of the death of Shidane Arone go deep into the past of the Airborne Regiment and into the heart of Airborne regimental culture.

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## Notes

### CHAPTER ONE — INTRODUCTION

- 1 Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) was a famous French mathematician who wrote over 500 books and articles including several on the scientific method.
- 2 A qualifier needs to be put on the word “elite.” Many in the CF maintain that the Airborne was not elite however it is clear from my interviews that Airborne members *perceived* themselves as elite. Moreover, they constantly trained with other national elite units such as the 82nd Airborne, which also led them to believe they were elite. We will see in Chapter 4 that the Airborne believed itself to be special and behaved accordingly. If the proof is in the pudding then some argue that the Airborne was not elite simply because it was never in combat except for an episode in Cyprus. On the other hand one could argue that the Airborne was an elite unit by virtue of its rigorous and special training (see Chapter 4).
- 3 George Devereux, who died in 1986, was a Professor of Ethno Psychiatry in France at the École des Hautes Études en sciences sociales and author of numerous books.
- 4 It has become increasingly clear that the Canadian military role will primarily involve participation in international peace missions or in a small component of an international force in the case of war.

### CHAPTER 2 — THE MILITARY

- 1 The relationship between the sending state and the host country (if a civil authority exists) is worked out in complex agreements which set out their respective jurisdictions. However, in general, the military authorities of the sending state have the primary right to exercise jurisdiction over one of its members.
- 2 Cited in *Canadian Forces Officers General Specification*, June 15, 1995, p. ii.
- 3 Maj Romas Blekaitis cited in Bercuson 1996: 108.

- 4 Iverson (1995: 7) has noted that the military "bears more resemblance to a religious order than, say, a modern corporation."
- 5 Reverend Arthur E. Gans quoted in Bercuson (1996: 88).
- 6 LGen Robert Gard quoted in Gabriel (1982: 89).
- 7 Section 33 (1) of the *National Defence Act* states that "the regular force, all units and all other elements thereof and all officers and non-commissioned members thereof are at all times liable to perform any lawful duty."
- 8 This is also true in the United States: "What sets the profession of apart and lends it a special dignity is the unlimited liability under which those who follow it must serve" (Hackett 1986: 8).
- 9 Gen Walter Kerwin former vice-chief of staff of the U.S. Army quoted in Gabriel 1982: 91.
- 10 The Minister of Defence now has plans to abolish the military's death penalty.
- 11 A study by the CF Personnel Applied Research Unit found dissatisfaction concerning the unresponsiveness with the chain of command toward the submission of complaints and grievances (DND 1995b).
- 12 Canadian soldier quoted in Harrison and Laliberté (1994: 26).
- 13 Cited in DND 1994b: preface ii-iii.
- 14 As noted earlier, it is not easy for an NCM to pierce this "glass ceiling" and become an officer. Within the NCMs, the "men" — privates and corporals — constitute the non-supervisory segment of the CF (Cotton and Pinch 1986: 235).
- 15 There is another difference between NCMs and officers: social class. Moskos (1986: 40) noticed a tendency in the U.S. Army to marry young while the median age at first marriage in United States has risen over the last decade. He concluded from this anomaly that the Army has been recruiting disproportionately from a sub-population with a propensity to marry young — a reflection, he argued, of marginality in terms of class and culture in American society. A great deal of research has been done in Canada to learn who participates in the military at the enlisted level. Generally, the research shows that recruitment is much more likely from the economic, social and cultural margins of society (Cotton and Pinch 1986: 240). This is not illogical since "reliance on a volunteer system frequently involves a narrow social base, at least for the enlisted ranks since the military is competing with civilian occupations for its enlisted recruits and will normally draw a disproportionate number of enlistees from regions and socioeconomic groups with less access to high-status civilian occupations" (Jones 1985: 31). There are also differences in education. According to Brodeur's (1996: 104) calculations only 16 percent of NCMs in the CF have more than a post-secondary education while a post-secondary education is a prerequisite for becoming an officer. Members of the regular forces will take these courses at a military college

while others will go to a civilian university or college. There is one exception in the case of "commissioning through the ranks" when someone will move from being a non-commissioned officer to commissioned officer. In this case the minimum requirement would be a high school leaving certificate although the individual would probably feel motivated to take extra courses. Even so, the level of education in the Armed Forces is particularly lacking within the framework of a democracy that thinks of itself as a model or example within the Western world. In Canada 6.8 percent of officers have a higher university degree (master's degree or doctorate) as opposed to 39 percent of U.S. officers. Ninety percent of U.S. officers have a university diploma as compared to 60.1 percent of Canadian officers (Legault 1997: 40-41). I was told that this was because University education was frowned upon and not rewarded, particularly in the combat arms.

16 For a very interesting anthropological study of how warrant officers "train" young platoon commanders see Irwin 1993.

17 The military also reinforces the idealized and stereotyped vision of the special woman: she makes a special contribution to the development of the young man because of her strong connection to his Dream. She shares his Dream with him and helps him believe in the possibility of its ultimate realization in his own adult life" (McNally 1991: 263).

18 For a detailed discussion of the theories concerning the social construction of masculinity see Connell (1995).

19 Janowitz (1970: 126) was among the first to notice the consequences of technological change which had required a professionalization of the military.

These technological trends in war-making have necessitated extensive common modification in the military profession.... The changes in the military reflect organizational requirements which force the permanent military establishment to parallel other large-scale civilian organizations. As a result, the military takes on more and more the common characteristics of a government of business organization. Thus the differentiation between the military and the civilian...is seriously weakened. In all these trends the model of the professional soldier is being changed by "civilianizing" the military elite to a *greater extent than the "militarizing" of the civilian elite.*

This is particularly true in Canada where few of the current political elites have a military background.

20 In Canada, Kasurak (1982: 128) has noted that civilianization was caused by the integration into the defence establishment of new levels of technology which "have routinized some military skills which were formerly arduous and hence glamorous and which have required a shift in the trades composition of the armed services while simultaneously fragmenting them internally."

- 21 Traditionally, soldiers are expected to possess military virtues in all facets of their lives. This is inherent in the idea that the military is not just a job but a way of life. For the military, expectations are higher than for average Canadians and include the notion that they should serve as a symbol of all that is best in the national character. But is there a Canadian national character which can be exemplified? Are basic Christian core values such as courage, justice, patriotism, prudence, veracity, obedience and patience in fact standards to which the Canadian national character aspires?
- 22 Anecdotal evidence cited in Neill (nd: 10).
- 23 The idea of organizational culture received limited attention outside of academia until the late 1970s when an interrelated group of people, most of them associated with a small set of universities and consulting firms (Harvard, Stanford, MIT, McKinsey and MAC) began asserting the importance of what they called "corporate" or "organizational" culture. Their claims were based mostly on three kinds of research: of Japanese firms that consistently outperformed their American competition; of the U.S. firms that...began to emerge in the 1970s; and of companies that were trying to develop and implement competitive strategies to cope with that new environment, but were having difficulty doing so. In each case, despite differences in initial research, focus, terminology and methodology, the fundamental conclusions were very similar and very dramatic: all firms have corporate cultures, although some have much "stronger" cultures than others; these cultures can exert a powerful effect on individuals and on performance (Kotter and Heskett 1992: 9).
- 24 DND quoted in *Defence 2000 News* April 1996: p. 15.
- 25 This is in spite of changes due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War which brought about the end of Canada's permanent military presence in Europe (in 1994 the Canadian base in Lahr, Germany was closed). Up to that point, one of the main purposes of the Canadian army was to maintain the Canadian brigade in Europe, and this had a heavy influence on army doctrinal development and structure (see Maloney 1993).
- 26 For more information on the impact of the Charter, see Heard (1988) and Pinch (1994b).
- 27 It is interesting to note that this "perception" is not accurate in terms of Aboriginal members who are disproportionately under-represented in the officer class (see Table 2).
- 28 According to Gen (ret) Vance (personal communication, March 1996) this was done to compensate for the decision to organize the CF trade structures on the basis of remuneration for the degree of technical difficulty and skills



in order to compete effectively with the private sector for personnel. As a result, the computer expert was in a more highly paid trade than the warrior infantryman, even though they might have the same seniority. Without the bonus, the one who had the "safe cushy job" would have received a higher pay than the one who had the long hours and safety risks.

- 29 Some 20 percent of all applicants to the CF are women (Bercuson 1996: 100).
- 30 In 1993, only 3 percent of female soldiers were in the combat arms. Bercuson (1996: 83) tells us that even though standards were "lowered" 83 percent of female applicants failed the entrance exams for battle school at CFB Gagetown because "few women possess the physical capabilities needed for the combat trades." It is unfortunate that Bercuson does not discuss whether the standards were changed to suit women's physical abilities or whether women were asked to perform male-oriented tests which emphasize upper body strength.
- 31 According to Chouinard and Chiasson (1995: 17-18) larger proportions of Aboriginal people are found in the land environment than in the air and sea environments, and the majority of Aboriginal people in the CF were First Nation (55.7 percent of the surveyed Aboriginals) and Métis (39.9 percent of the surveyed Aboriginals).
- 32 According to the 1991 Canadian census, as cited in Long and Dickason (1996: 185), status and non-status Aboriginal people represent between 2.5 and 3 percent of the Canadian population. This would suggest that Aboriginal people are under-represented in the CF. In comparison, native Americans were 0.7 percent of the population in the United States in 1993. In the Army they were 0.4 percent of officers and 0.6 percent of enlisted men and women (Grosch 1994: 2).
- 33 Chouinard and Chiasson's 1995 data do not cover all the CF; they include only those who responded to their survey. Further, the number of minorities in CAR is almost too small to make a comparison meaningful. The data from CAR on minorities at the time of deployment to Somalia are not available. Therefore, one cannot know if there was any change in the unit from 1992 to 1995.
- 34 In 1969, Gen Allard submitted a "Long-term Program for Bilingualism in the Canadian Forces." It anticipated the implementation of bilingualism over the following 10 years and the number of Francophones grew from 21.6 percent of the CF in 1974 to around 27 percent in 1994 (Bernier 1994).
- 35 There has been no work done on this in Canada. In the United States the work has taken a definite psychological turn. According to one study:  
A father or uncle who was a soldier in the last war, and whose war experience have been family property since that time, transmits powerful

incentives to the son. Driven by identification, he seeks to recapitulate the father's experience and perhaps outshine him. In families with a long military tradition, the effect upon the motivation of the masculine members needs no comment. But America has been a peaceable country where there are few families with a military tradition. As a kind of substitute, however, there are families with a strong aggressive tradition in sports and economic and social activity. The past attitude of the authoritative members of the family in regard to carrying out aggressive activities and obligations produces a strong urge in the children to respond to the military call (See Grinker and Spiegel [1945: 41] for a discussion of this.)

- 36 There have been notable exceptions such as the military operations during the October Crisis and the Oka Crisis, and recently during the flooding in Manitoba.
- 37 It is interesting to note that Captain Yuzichuk, CAR adjutant during Operation Deliverance who felt that the Airborne were definitely not an elite unit, did testify to the Board of Inquiry that the CAR was most like the U.S. Marines (BOI testimony of Cpt Yuzichuk 1993: 673).
- 38 According to Ricks (1995: 4) after socialization in the Marines it's difficult to go home especially for Black recruits who have always felt alienated from mainstream American society. "And now even their old neighbourhoods feel strange."
- 39 If the line infantry unit is at one end of the continuum and the civilianized force, with its emphasis on occupational values, is at the other, the Airborne could be considered a deviant of the line infantry model or at least at the extreme end of the institutional value scale.
- 40 I have to thank these soldiers who, in spite of the perceived risk agreed to the interviews.

### CHAPTER 3 — MILITARY CULTURE

- 1 Cotton (1993) feels that the unit culture of the CAR was "shaped by American ideas, attitudes and terminology over the years as unit members identified more and more with their American counterparts in the Rangers, US Airborne Special Forces, rather than with Canadian brothers and sisters." He feels that it is through exchanges such as this that the rebel flag came to be adopted by 2 Commando. Comments by our interviewees confirmed this. It is known that the Confederate flag was used as a symbol for the PPCLI hockey team (which was called "the Rebels") while the unit was stationed in Germany. Some informants maintained that the flag was first adopted as the symbol of 2 Commando (the commando from the PPCLI parent regiment) after a joint exercise with U.S. troops.

- 2 Military socialization is considered to be secondary socialization, that is, it occurs after the primary socialization of childhood. Primary socialization takes place "with the learning by an individual of the cultural patterns, norms and behaviours which a given society thinks valid for its members...professional role learning, relating to the socialization to those traits and patterns characterizing a specific role, defined by a relatively distinct complex of goals, behaviours and performance models [is] secondary or professional socialization" (Caforio and Nuciari 1995: 1).
- 3 For an extremely interesting account of how platoon commanders are socialized see Irwin 1993.
- 4 The recruit course for all Canadian Forces members is about 11 weeks long and held in one location (Saint-Jean, Quebec). A new recruit could withdraw voluntarily at the end of the first week. Thereafter, he cannot withdraw (except for certain types of training or medical failures) until graduation from the CF Recruit Course. The next phase (level 3 or basic trades training) is done at branch schools. For example, mechanics go to CFB Borden while infantry go to one of the three (The Royal Canadian Regiment [The RCR], Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry [PPCLI], Royal 22e Régiment [R22eR] battle schools). This phase varies in length from trade to trade, with infantry training lasting about 9 or 10 weeks. During this time, voluntary withdrawal is discouraged. However, the window opens up one more time at the end of this phase and before the now "basically trained" soldier reports to his unit. The voluntary release "gate" approach is used in order to give the socialization process a chance to work.
- 5 Identity with the group is not an accident; loyalty to the group is planned for as an objective of basic socialization. Promoting a team-work image does not conflict with masculine values of competition, aggression, and fighting to win, nor does such an orientation in any way imply relations more intimate than masculine camaraderie or companionship and survival relations considered integral to the buddy system. Keeping in mind that basic training is primarily training for combat, the military effectively structures both formal and informal factors to promote the dependence of the individual on the group (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978: 163).
- 6 Due to our inability to observe an army socialization first hand it is necessary to rely on information from literary sources.
- 7 Basic training is also a form of pre-indoctrination for the recruit's family members who learn to become a support network for his career in the military, learning to take care of things during the recruit's absence (Arkin and Dobrofsky 1978, Harrison and Laliberté 1994 for details). Basic training may be viewed as akin to archaic ceremonies where a boy is removed from his mother's care

for extended periods so male elders may instruct him in the ways of manhood in preparation for his symbolic rebirth as an adult member of the community.

- 8 Starr (1982: 66) looked at military subcultures and found that there were differences between the services, e.g., submariners had a tendency to be quiet, calm, intelligent and rational, "Although all submariners are tested and examined to select individuals with the desired traits, such attitudes are also learned and reinforced by the values found within the subculture."
- 9 According to one psychiatrist (Peck 1983: 224), most people will commit violence with remarkable ease under obedience. The clearest case, of course, is Stanley Milgram's (1963, 1965, 1974) obedience experiments. "Faced with an imposing, close-at-hand commander, sixty-five percent of his adult subjects fully obeyed instructions. On command, they would deliver what appeared to be traumatizing electric shocks to a screaming innocent victim in an adjacent room. These were ordinary people — a mix of blue collar, white collar and professional men. They despised their task" and expressed concern for their victim, yet obedience took precedence over their own moral sense.
- 10 French airborne colonel Marcel Bigeard once said: "the men of the regiment are handsome, proud and courageous...we make real men out of them; healthy sporting types, humane and well bred" (quoted in Beaumont 1963: 109).
- 11 Somalia Inquiry Document #1, "Service Paper...The way ahead...", prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993, p.2/14-3/14.
- 12 An important part of the advisors' mandate is to provide advice and input to the NDHQ personnel staff on key promotions and appointments within the regiment. This is, to a certain extent, a natural role for them since they have known their officers throughout their military career. In contrast, a member's superiors in the chain of command and his career manager will change regularly. Because they have this form of "corporate memory," their input on personnel is highly valued by the chain of command and although they have no formal authority in the process, the personnel recommendations of these regimental councils are, in practice, very influential.
- 13 A Battle Group based on 12<sup>e</sup> Régiment blindé du Canada (12 RBC) served as Canadian Battalion 2 (Canbat 2) in UNPROFOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina) from October 1993 to May 1994. At the end of the tour, members of the incoming unit received information on and reported various incidents of misconduct by the outgoing unit, including misuse of alcohol, sexual misconduct and black market activities. During the ensuing military police investigations, some of which were still ongoing when the Board of Inquiry reported in November 1996, various other concerns came to light regarding the state of discipline and overall effectiveness of the unit.



CHAPTER 4 — AIRBORNE!

- 1 See Bercuson 1996: 176-177 for details
- 2 Gen Boyle April 20, 1995, meeting with the Judge Advocate General, Ottawa, pp. 52-53.
- 3 Erving Goffman (1962: 473) would see a house organ newspaper like *The Maroon Beret* as an institutional ceremony which provides local news and reflects an editorial view. It was a form of get-together for various rank levels and generations of Airborne.
- 4 For example, Cpl Robin the Black initiate was reluctant to tell Commissioners anything that might incriminate or cast a bad light on other members of 1 Commando. Similarly, he testified that he was willing to put up with having KKK written on his back in order to be accepted by the group.
- 5 This is an old tradition among elite units. I was told that the German SS members used to tattoo their blood type in their armpit. Paradoxically this led to their undoing since at the end of the war the Russians used the tattoos to discover disguised SS and shoot them.
- 6 The spirit of comradeship is not too far removed from a totemic cult. It is rather common among military units to have an animal or natural object for their unit symbol. Most units in Korea developed certain rituals concerning their totem. Regulations, whether written or not...outline the soldiers relations with the totem. A breach of rules requires a penalty usually buying a round of drinks for the house.... A unit with a high esprit de corps achieves a strong identify with its totem. An offense to the totem is taken seriously and quickly brings reprisals. In these units, as in totemic societies, the strength of the totem is passed on to the members (Lopez-Reyes 1971: 195).
- 7 In his study of 750 U.S. paratroopers Cockerham (1978: 11) found that they show a higher level of willingness to engage in combat than other soldiers.
- 8 Boyle April 20, 1995, meeting with Judge Advocate General, Ottawa, p. 52.
- 9 In the military context there are many examples of elite units. Darby's Rangers, the Special Air Service, and the French Foreign Legion, etc., have all come to represent daring, determination and expertise. Some elite units, such as the US Army Tank Destroyer Corps of World War 2, were created to compensate for technological deficiencies, making up by sheer quality of fighting spirit for the superior weaponry (in this case the Wehrmacht's heavy tanks) that the enemy possessed. Other units, such as the British Long Range Desert Group in North Africa, or Merrill's Marauders, who fought the Japanese in Burma, were an attempt to compensate for strategic weaknesses. Some, like the Chasseurs Alpins and the Submarine Command, fought highly specialized forms of warfare. Some units became known as elite by

association with the tactical successes of the weapons systems they operated. This was the case of the German Panzer Korps, and the Strategic Missile Command of the USAF. A few earned elite status by virtue of the military genius of their leaders such as the *Afric Korps* under General Rommel. (Col J.D. Joly Memo to COS, Subject: Director Infantry Response to the CDS Remarks about elitism in the Canadian Airborne Regiment. December 1, 1993 File 5000-1(G1), Annex A p. 1.

- 10 Resistance to elite insignia is not new. In the first half century of the American Republic the Army's mounted troops had to be called dragoons because of the objections of Congress to aristocratic "cavalry." (Beaumont 1974: 188). It is interesting to note that one of Gen Beno's proposed solutions to the Airborne problem was to take away their special smock (see Somalia Inquiry #1 document, Service Paper...The Way Ahead... , Prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993.
- 11 Somalia Inquiry #1 document, Service Paper...The Way Ahead..., Prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993.
- 12 Document DND396765 from the standardized Airborne Indoctrination Course compiled by Col Kenward, October 1993 Document book 57B, tab 27.
- 13 The term "fifth columnists" means subversives.
- 14 See Berger and Luckmann (1966) for a description of the theory and Segal and Segal (1993) for an application of the theory to peace keepers.
- 15 Somalia Inquiry #1 document, Service Paper...The Way Ahead..., Prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993 Document book 32, tab 5, p. 3.
- 16 Robert Brown, former U.S. Army Special Forces in Vietnam founded *Soldier of Fortune: the journal of professional adventurers*. Since then a dozen warrior magazines have entered the market (*New Breed*, *Gung-ho*, *American Survival Guide*, *Combat Handguns*, *S.W.A.T.*, etc.)
- 17 Other parallels were drawn with Vietnam in the interviews, particularly the perceived persecution of the Airborne by the media and rejection of returning soldiers by an ungrateful public. In fact soldiers were so bitter that many have said that if the Somalia service medal were ever issued they would throw it away, wouldn't want it, would spit on it, would put it away and never look at it again, etc.
- 18 Trophy photos have existed for some time. In Ambrose (1992), there is an Airborne trophy photo from World War II of three soldiers, two holding up a German flag and one standing on Hitler's staff car. Parker (1995) also notes the taking of trophies Turkish coffee pots from Cyprus that find their way to Canadian war museums. In this way, ordinary household items are invested with new meanings.

- 19 The importance of the primary group in combat was that it set and emphasized group standards of behaviour and sustained the individual in difficult situations. The group was able to enforce its standards by offering or withholding recognition respect and approval (Cockerham 1981: 109).
- 20 It is also important to note that soldiers were given more responsibility in the Airborne than they normally would have in their parent regiment. Maj Magee testified to the BOI (p. 1069) that soldiers and NCOs in the Airborne were given more latitude for initiative and more responsibility in many cases.
- 21 Somalia Inquiry #1 document, Service Paper...The Way Ahead..., Prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993.
- 22 For details on McKay's extremist activities see Kinsella (1994: 334-348) and Bercuson (1996: 213-214).

## CHAPTER 5 — SOMALIA

- 1 Somalia has a seat in both the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Arab League.
- 2 This figure varies because of the nomadic lifestyle of many Somalis.
- 3 Boys and young men move with the camels far and fast to waterless grazing zones while their mothers, younger brothers and sisters move more slowly with the flocks through watered pastures.
- 4 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Commission of Inquiry Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1270.
- 5 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1291.
- 6 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1292.
- 7 A number of rehabilitation schemes were under way to make the country self-sufficient in sugar and to export this product. Production of cotton more than doubled in the '80s, but it must still be imported.
- 8 Makinda (1992: 35). Output increased by more than 70 percent in the first five years after independence, but declined steadily from 1972 to 1986 and rose again in 1989.
- 9 Twelve major agricultural development programs were launched in the early '80s. Self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs was the aim. Production of cereals increased steadily, despite drought in the '70s and '80s. In 1985, Somalia became self-sufficient in maize and sorghum, but has not maintained this achievement.
- 10 The term clan-family was proposed by Lewis (1961).
- 11 The five major clans, in order of numerical strength are:
  - 1) the Darod, who inhabit the southwest and northeast regions. Siad Barre is a member of this clan;

- 2) the Hawiye which lives in the central eastern and southern regions;
  - 3) the Isaaq living in the central region;
  - 4) the Dir of the northwest; and
  - 5) the only main clan grouping which is not nomadic, the Rahanwein, who engage in agriculture in the south.
- 12 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1282.
  - 13 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1282.
  - 14 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1272.
  - 15 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1273-1274.
  - 16 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1273.
  - 17 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1274.
  - 18 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1279.
  - 19 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1352.
  - 20 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1277.
  - 21 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1277.
  - 22 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1280.
  - 23 The removal of the clitoris and labia minora and the sewing up of the vagina until it is all but closed are performed in a single operation when a girl is about 6 to 10 years old.
  - 24 Women are considered to be socially less developed because they menstruate, give birth, lactate and when pregnant they publicly display their sexuality. These conditions are seen as weakness and a sign of a lack of independence, the antithesis of the social ideal (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 318-319).
  - 25 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1275.
  - 26 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1276.
  - 27 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1288.
  - 28 Legendary intermarriage between Somalis and saintly Arab families which took place in the 11th and 13th centuries, ensured Somalis' adoption of Islam.
  - 29 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1289.
  - 30 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1289-1290.
  - 31 Britain secured most of the northern littoral. France took the northwest headland that is now Djibouti. Italy which had earlier established itself on the Red Sea in Eritrea, acquired control over most of Somalia's Indian Ocean shore. The southernmost part of Somali territory, much of it now in Kenya, also went to the British. Ethiopia, reacting to the European presence and unsuccessfully seeking an outlet to the sea, moved east, seizing the important Somali pasture land of the Ogaden steppe (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 292).
  - 32 In European Somalia, this was known as the Dervish Uprising and it began in 1899 with raids against Somali lineages and clans friendly to the British (Barnes and Boddy 1994: 293).



- 33 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1289-1290.
- 34 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1295.
- 35 Italy, nevertheless maintained commercial links with Somalia and was the only country involved in mediating regional conflicts in the late 1980s and early 1990s. For example, Italy sought to bring together the Barre government and the various Somali resistance forces which were unfortunately not at all interested in negotiating. Later, after the fall of the Barre regime, Italy tried to mediate with the various militias but again efforts failed (Makinda 1992: 71).
- 36 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1296.
- 37 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1296.
- 38 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1297.
- 39 The government sought to quadruple the size of its army which was 5,000 strong at independence. The Americans, because of their ties to Ethiopia only helped upgrade the Somali police force. In 1962, the Soviet Union gave Somalia loans, sophisticated weaponry and sent out military advisors. Thus armed, Somalia then engaged in border wars with Kenya and Ethiopia. (Laitin and Samatar 1987: 74).
- 40 Although Barre relied on his own clan, the Marehan, which was part of the Darod clan-family to support his rule, until the late 1980s his main power base remained the army which was dominated by the Ogadenis who were also part of the Darod clan-family (Makinda 1992: 24-25).
- 41 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1299-1300.
- 42 Ethiopia during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie had been a close ally of the United States. The new Marxist government in Ethiopia appealed to Moscow for aid, and the Soviet Union extended substantial assistance to the Ethiopian army, including military equipment and Cuban advisors (Omaar 1992: 231).
- 43 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1298.
- 44 According to Samuel Makinda (1992: 63):

The superpowers competed for influence in the 1970s and early 1980s, but withdrew with the end of the Cold War. Middle East powers were involved in the 1970s and 1980s either as an extension of the Arab-Israeli dispute or as part of the rivalry between Arab states, and until the Gulf War the involvement of these countries was increasing. The UN and OAU have also been involved peripherally. However, since the 1980s, the international organizations which have played a major part are those helping with famine relief (with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) playing a prominent role).
- 45 The former U.S. military base in Eritrea was part of the network of American and NATO military communications. When the Soviet Union established a naval presence in Somalia and a base at Berbera beginning in the late 1960s it was regarded as a threat to Western security interests in the region (Makinda 1992: 63).

- 46 In aggregate terms, the Horn received only a modest amount of arms compared to other parts of the world but its per capita consumption of weapons was higher than any other part of Africa. In the mid-1970s at the height of the Soviet-Somali friendship Somalia had the best-equipped forces in Black Africa, over US\$20 per capita compared to \$4.47 per capita for Ethiopia. The United States was not as generous as the Soviet Union in military aid, supplying only 8 percent of what the Ethiopian forces were receiving from the Soviets. It is important to note that the provision of arms to the Horn fanned regional conflicts. Had it not been for the advanced military equipment supplied by the Soviets to Somalia it is conceivable that the Ogaden war might never have happened. Similarly, Cuba played a critical role in the conflict by helping the Ethiopians repel the Somali invasion (Makinda 1992: 65).
- 47 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1294.
- 48 The extremely unpopular defeat at the hands of Ethiopia led to an upsurge of clan antagonisms which, in turn, are said to have been responsible for the attempted coup in April 1978 and the creation of the Somalia Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) by officers from the Majerteen clan, the only clan from the Darod clan-family which had been excluded from central power. This group eventually took refuge in Ethiopia. The peace agreement was also resented by the Ogadenis, the dominant clan in the army, who felt the struggle for the unification of their homeland had been abandoned. The MOD alliance collapsed leaving little common-ground for any form of clan co-operation.
- 49 This practice was curtailed by Congress after 1989 (Omaar 1992: 231).
- 50 The more aggressive faction of the Hawiye, consisting of armed nomads, former prisoners and street boys, had begun to terrorize Mogadishu and its inhabitants, particularly members of the Darod clans.
- 51 Formed in 1990, the Manifesto Group represented cross-clan opposition to Barre. This group was made up of four of the major clans: Isaaq, Hawiye, the Darod and Rahanwein. They published an anti-Barre declaration in May 1990.
- 52 Ali Mahdi's Abgaal-Harti was a minority that needed to keep the other groups happy. And Aideed's Habar Gidir-Saad was dependent on the Habar-Gidir-Ayr and Habar-Gidir-Suleymaan for its infantry strength. And few were even remotely aware that Aideed's even more immediate clan, the Habar-Gidir-Saad-Jalaf, was involved in tense negotiations with the Habar Gidir-Saad-Hilolwe, the group that supplied most of Aideed's money and top advisers (Maren 1996: 203; see also, Wyllie 1993: 72).
- 53 The infamous "green line" divided Mogadishu in half, with Ali Mahdi dominant in the north and Aideed in the south. (See Wyllie 1993: 72).
- 54 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1343.

- 55 At the time of the UN intervention, there was little infrastructure left: two airfields, at Hargeysa and Mogadishu were in operation. Ports were in poor condition and roads were poorly maintained.
- 56 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1307-1309.
- 57 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1311-1312.
- 58 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1312.
- 59 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1279.
- 60 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1317-1318.
- 61 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1320; Omaar (1992: 233).
- 62 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1321-1322.
- 63 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1322.
- 64 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1324.
- 65 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1325.
- 66 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1328.
- 67 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1269.
- 68 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1271.
- 69 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1271-1272.
- 70 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1284.
- 71 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1284.
- 72 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1285.
- 73 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1284, 1340.
- 74 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1282-1284.
- 75 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1285.
- 76 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1286.
- 77 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1303.
- 78 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1338.
- 79 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1338.
- 80 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1339.
- 81 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1333.
- 82 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1353-1354.
- 83 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1362.
- 84 Testimony of Dr. Menkhaus, Vol. 7, October 23, 1995: 1362-1363.

## CHAPTER 6 — THE AIRBORNE IN SOMALIA

- 1 Segal and Segal (1993: 46) have done 15 years of research on peacekeeping missions in the Sinai focusing on the importance of how peacekeeping operations were socially constructed both at a micro and macro level.
- 2 The change in mission also had an impact on preparedness since most of the training which took place in the autumn of 1992 prepared the soldiers for a

peacekeeping mission in the northern coastal area of Bossasso. This Chapter VI operation (Cordon) was then changed to a Chapter VII peace making mission (Operation Deliverance) in December 1992 just a few weeks before deployment. The region the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group (CARBG) was to work in was also changed to the south-central area around Belet Huen.

- 3 Now that the mission was a coalition operation the soldiers were allowed to wear their own head dress rather than the blue beret of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) I.
- 4 In comparison, the Americans had many military police in Somalia. The Army Joint Force Command had one company of 120 military police while the Army itself had another 100 or so. In addition the Marines also brought along their military police (Karen Fair personal communication January 22, 1995).
- 5 Technicals were men driving pick-up trucks modified to mount antiaircraft guns and machine guns.
- 6 Fair (1995: 21-23) describes the ROEs she taught. Of 10 basic principles of ROEs, #1 was "the US is not at war"; #7 "deadly force can not be used to protect property"; #8 "if you use deadly force you must be able to articulate how you perceived your life was threatened or, if in the defence of others, be able to articulate how the other person's life was threatened"; #10 "use graduated force/escalation of force proportionate to the perceived threat."
- 7 Similarly, Cockerham and Cohen (1980: 1275) tell us that what most distinguishes the military from other bureaucracies is that they must train and socialize their membership to norms that are non-normative in civilian society, such as kill people and obey orders implicitly. Whenever people are socialized to follow orders, there is the danger that they will suspend their own moral judgment especially when under great stress.
- 8 See testimony of Maj Lelièvre to the BOI which describes the communications set up in detail, Vol. II: 399-411.
- 9 American enlisted soldier in Somalia quoted in Miller and Moskos (1995: 621).
- 10 "When the initial novelty wears off, disciplinary offenses may increase. Some contingents find that these offenses peak about halfway through a tour" (International Peace Academy 1984: 384 ).
- 11 Prentice-Dunn and Rogers, 1981 quoted in Paulus 1989: 100.
- 12 Prentice-Dunn and Rogers, 1981 quoted in Paulus 1989: 100.
- 13 Fifty-nine out of 268 incidents during the Belgian deployment to Somalia involved acts of brutality against Somali citizens. These acts ranged from homicide to assault. For example, a lieutenant and corporal forced two Somali children caught stealing to dig their own graves and held a gun to one child's temple to "teach them a lesson." There was also an incident where two



Belgian sergeants beat and tortured a Somali with electricity. (See Auditorat général, Belgique 1993 and Brodeur 1996).

- 14 Hate can be described as an attitude or an emotion caused by frustration and involving hostility (Ballard and McDowell 1991: 230).
- 15 If Miller and Moskos' (1995) data from American soldiers are extrapolated from, we can assume that Black soldiers would have adopted a humanitarian response to Somalis.
- 16 According to Addicott and Hudson (1993: 162) the use of derogatory terms and characterizations of inferiority inure soldiers to killing their enemy.
- 17 Similarly, Maj Magee testified to the BOI that he looked at well-off Somalis with a "jaundiced eye" because they seemed to be getting all the aid and all the resources, Vol. IV: 1084.
- 18 There are studies which show that empathy and aggression are inversely related. According to Miedzian (1991: 24) "empathy is considered soft, irrational, effeminate and antithetical to rational hard-nosed thinking."
- 19 This quote suggests the role of leadership in what went wrong on the evening of March 16 cannot be overlooked. As we noted earlier, there had already been precedents which suggested that mistreatment of prisoners in order to "teach them a lesson" was tolerated "unofficially" as Kyle Brown (Worthington 1997: 122-124) described it. At Maj Seward's court-martial, Capt Sox (GCM Maj A.G. Seward, Vol. 2: 336) testified that he believed that the order to "abuse prisoners" meant "to rough up" or "teach a lesson." Maj Seward (GCM Maj A.G. Seward, Vol. 2: 336) himself testified that he said: "I don't care if you abuse them, but I want those infiltrators captured.... Abuse them if you have to. I do not want weapons used. I do not want gun fire." Capt Sox (GCM Maj A.G. Seward, Vol. 2: 348) then went on to tell his men that "we have been tasked to capture and abuse prisoners." Sgt Hiller (GCM Pte D.J. Brocklebank, Vol. 2: 348) testified at Pte Brocklebank's court-martial that Capt Sox said that if a prisoner resisted "you could beat the shit out of him." After receiving his instructions, Sgt Boland (GCM Maj A.G. Seward, Vol. 3: 413) reportedly told MCpl Matchee, a member of his section "that Capt Sox had given orders that prisoners were to be abused."

## CHAPTER 7 — CONCLUSIONS

- 1 Even in peacetime, cohesion had been found to be conducive to enhanced military performance. See Kellett (nd).
- 2 For details on the dehumanization of victims see Grossman 1995.
- 3 Israeli research indicates that the risk of death for a kidnap victim is much greater if the victim is hooded. Cultural distance is another form of emotional hooding that can work just as effectively according to Grossman (1995: 161).

- 4 Training in basic human skills is needed for peace missions. Unfortunately, as Col Oehring (February 17, 1995) has pointed out: "young officers and NCMs in the Canadian Army have never been taught basic human interaction techniques."
- 5 Johansson (1995: 14) found that the qualities of good peacekeepers are flexibility, patience, humility, diplomacy, tolerance, adaptability, staying powers and an ability to stand the strain.

# **The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia: A Socio-cultural Inquiry**

Donna Winslow

**T**his study examines how military culture, and particularly that of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, affected the behaviour of Canadian soldiers in Somalia. It argues that the events which occurred in Somalia in 1993 can be traced to contradictions within the military establishment (due to the tension between the traditional, or combat, paradigm and the modern, or bureaucratic/occupational, paradigm); to the culture and organization of the Airborne combat unit; and to the situational contingencies that arose from the external environment in Somalia. Material was gathered from visual records, personal and official documents and studies on other national forces in Somalia, and on Canadian peacekeeping operations elsewhere. The interpretations and analysis in this study are based on more than 50 in-depth interviews and focus groups held with military personnel who were deployed to Somalia.

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