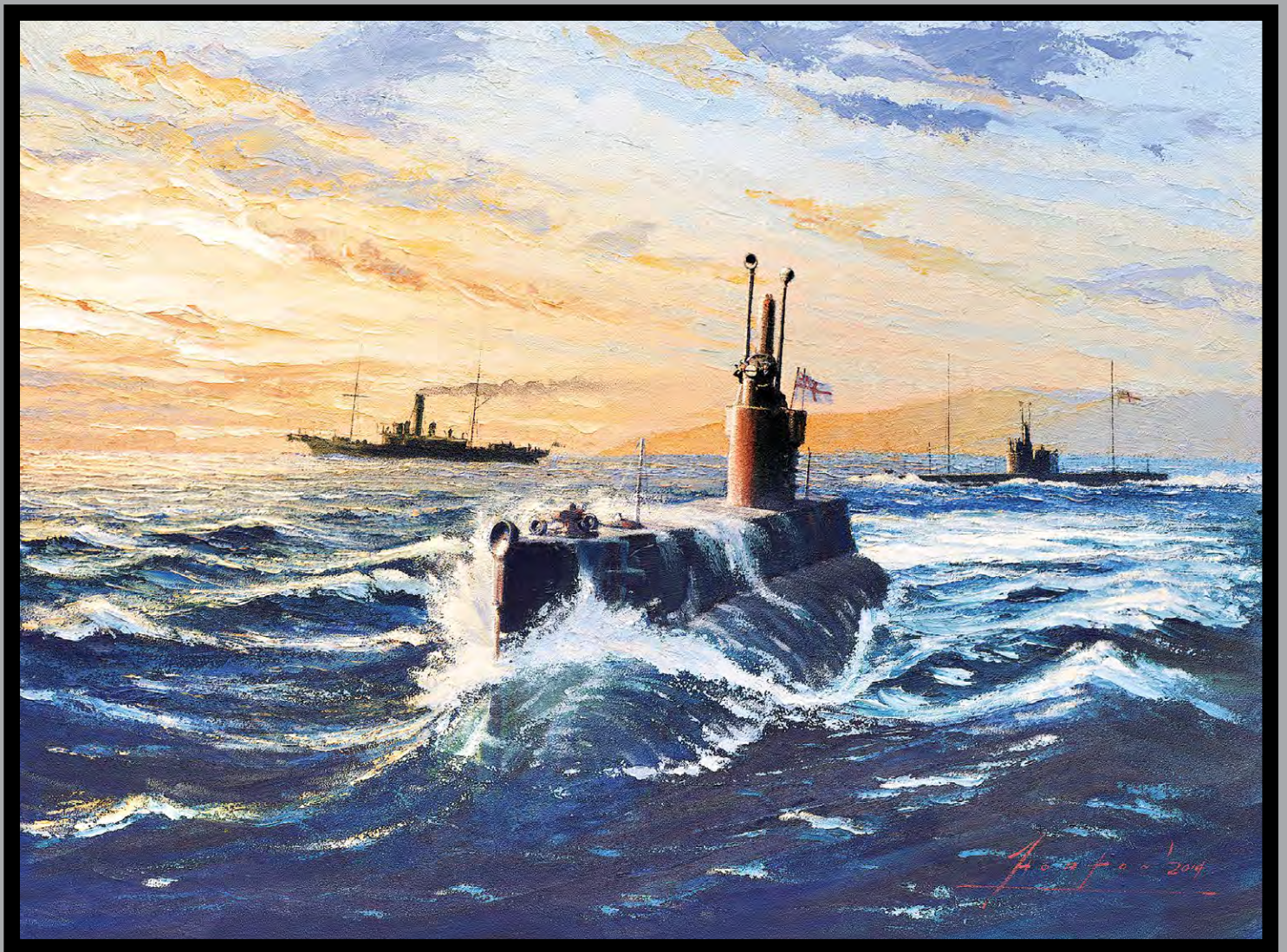


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Cover

Canada's First Submarines,
by John M. Horton, CSMA –
Canadian Society of Marine
Artists.

Naval Marine Archive/Canadian Society
of Marine Artists



**China Looking North:
Compromising Canada's
Arctic Sovereignty
and Security?**



**In Need of Rescue:
Canadian Search
and Rescue Policy**

3 EDITOR'S CORNER

THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE

4 China Looking North: Compromising Canada's Arctic Sovereignty and Security?

by Adam P. MacDonald

16 The Social Construction of War

by Mitchell Binding

AEROSPACE OPERATIONS

23 In Need of Rescue: Canadian Search and Rescue Policy

by James Pierotti

MILITARY STRATEGY

32 British Strategic Culture and General Sir Alan Brooke during the Second World War

by Greg Smith

MILITARY HISTORY

45 Asian- and Black-Canadians at Vimy Ridge

by Mathias Joost

SPECIAL REPORT

56 Royal Military College of Canada Special Staff Assistance Visit Update

by Virginia Tattersall

VIEWS AND OPINIONS

60 Navigating Towards a New Identity: Military to Civilian Transition

by Darryl G. Cathcart

COMMENTARY

64 Dialogue on Defence

by Martin Shadwick

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

71 Geopolitics

by Bill Bentley

74 BOOK REVIEWS

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Royal Military College of Canada Special Staff Assistance Visit Update

CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

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NOTE TO READERS

As a bilingual journal, readers should take note that where citations are translated from their original language, the abbreviation [TOQ] at the end of the note, which stands for "translation of original quote", indicates to the readers that the original citation can be found in the published version of the Journal in the other official language.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Welcome to yet another winter edition of the *Canadian Military Journal*. Here in the Great White North, we are still enjoying mild autumn weather as I pen these words. However, while various juries are still out as to how severe the winter will be in this neck of the woods, my old quarter horse, Major, is growing his winter coat like there is no tomorrow, and he is *never* wrong...

Leading off this time, independent academic/journalist and former sailor Adam MacDonald reviews China's relatively-recent *interest in and orientation towards* the maritime arctic, and focuses on some broad concerns in terms of their potential impact upon regional stability and Canadian sovereignty. Next, in our continuing efforts to encourage young and gifted scholars, Second Lieutenant Mitchell Binding, 'helicopter pilot in waiting,' examines the social construction of wars in general, *how* they are socially constructed, and the *extent* to which this is accomplished.

Then, Major James Pierotti, an Air Combat Systems Officer with extensive experience in the Search and Rescue (SAR) community, reiterates the pressing need for a robust and effective federal SAR policy for Canada. "Specific examples will highlight the types of operational concerns that were hidden in the policy gap until recently, and it will be clarified [as to] how policy can resolve each concern."

The study of military strategy and its great contributors has been an extensively-recurring theme in the pages of this journal. This time out, Brigadier-General Greg Smith, a recent graduate of the National Security Program at Canadian Forces College Toronto, examines British strategic culture and its influence upon the Second World War, particularly through the lens of one of its most distinguished practitioners, General Sir Alan Brooke. Then, in the last of our major articles this time out, Major Mathias Joost of the Directorate of History and Heritage touts the participation of visible minorities as combatants for Canada during the Great War. Specifically, he examines the means "...by which

Black-and-Japanese-Canadians were accepted into the [Canadian Expeditionary Force] CEF, how this affected their presence at Vimy Ridge, and the nature of their participation."

Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall, a highly experienced logistics officer, current Commander of Military Personnel Generation, and Deputy-Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy in Kingston then presents a status report on the recent Special Staff Assistance Visit to the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario. While much work remains to be done, General Tattersall concludes "...the work undertaken to date is already making a difference in the climate of the two Colleges [Royal Military College of Canada and Royal Military College Saint-Jean] for both students and staff." Next, Royal Military College graduate and long-time serving member of Canada's military Darryl Cathcart, now pursuing a Master of Education degree at Queen's University, reviews the impact upon newly-released service members into civilian life, and offers thoughts on what can be done to possibly ease this often-difficult transition.

Our own Martin Shadwick then cites some of the complicated and demanding military tasking needs for Canada's armed forces in today's "unsettled and troubling international geo-strategic environment," and further posits that, "...issues of this gravity and cost demand thorough, thoughtful and informed debate," and that these compelling issues are deserving of the attention of Canadians from a very diversified and knowledgeable spectrum.

We then close with a book review essay from our recently-departed dear friend and colleague, Dr. Bill Bentley, on Geopolitics, and in lockstep with the major historical article in this issue, two very different book reviews dealing with the significance of Canada's victory at Vimy Ridge in April 1917.

Until the next time.

David L. Bashow
Editor-in-Chief
Canadian Military Journal



DND photo IS08-2017-00568-009 by Leading Seaman Zachariah Stopa

The sun sets behind the Cross of Sacrifice at the Tyne Cot Cemetery during the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele, 10 November 2017.



HMCS *Montréal* sails past an iceberg in Arctic waters during Operation *Nanook*, summer 2017.

China Looking North: Compromising Canada's Arctic Sovereignty and Security?

by Adam P. MacDonald

Adam P. MacDonald, BA, MA, *enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces in 2004, graduated from Royal Military College in 2008, then served for a further six years as a naval officer. Adam is currently an independent academic based in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and is a regular contributor to the Canadian Naval Review, East Asia Forum and Frontline Defence. He is affiliated with the Conference of Defence Associations Institute, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Nova Scotia, and is a member of the Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Ethics Board. Analyzing the study of China's rise in International Relations Theory; military developments in the Arctic; and the ongoing political transition in Myanmar are his current academic foci.*

Introduction

There is a steady growing *interest in and involvement of* external actors within the Arctic. Of these states, China consumes considerable academic and media interest in Canada.¹ Although there is near-universal agreement that Beijing's current Arctic engagements are conducted within accepted state and legal practices, there are disputes as to their underlying motivations, ultimate aims, and impact upon the regional order,

and Canada's role and place within it. The most concerned about China's increasing capabilities and activities in the North claim Beijing is subtly positioning itself either to remake or thwart the regional political architecture to gain unobstructed access to newly opening shipping routes and natural resources prospects, thereby compromising the interests and sovereignty of the Arctic states. China's entrance, furthermore, is represented as one of the most significant future stresses upon an already geopolitically-sensitive region, as states both *inside* and *increasingly outside* compete for influence and power, which will squarely place Ottawa at odds with Beijing.² This emerging strategic reality has motivated calls for Ottawa to prepare

"Much remains uncertain about China's interests and strategies for the Arctic..."

for such an eventuality, developing the required political rules and restrictions domestically and regionally, and military assets able to operate in the North to deter any possible Chinese revisionist predilections.³

Depictions emphasising the challenges China poses to Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security, however, are largely informed by the larger literature related to Rise in China, and the stability of the Arctic in general. By no means entirely dismissing concerns about China in the Arctic, these arguments rely upon these larger frameworks to contextualize and explain

Chinese thinking and action in the North, vice a more surgical and analysis of China's actual current Arctic engagements. Much remains uncertain about China's interests and strategies for the Arctic, but Canada should avoid simple characterizations of this phenomenon (and the issue of external actors in general) and instead, focus upon how to shape and influence Beijing's actions within the Arctic towards supporting the current regional political order which is increasingly focused upon addressing complex and complicated social, economic, and environmental issues associated with the region's growing accessibility, with respect to which China and Chinese entities play a role.



Chinese container ship *CSCL Arctic Ocean*, one of the largest container ships in the world, in Gdansk, Poland, 17 May 2017.

Wojciech Sirozyk/Alamy Live News/Alamy Stock Photo/J5H03C

THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE



Container ship *APL China* in Unalaska Bay, Alaska, 11 July 2012.

Dan Parrett/Design Pics Inc/Alamy Stock Photo/EA24TG

China as an Emerging Arctic Player

Over the past three decades, China's engagements in the Arctic have expanded both in size and scope, since the launch of their Polar program, largely defined by scientific research, in the 1980s. Beijing, however, *has not* (nor is *expected* to anytime soon) published an Arctic policy given the region's relative lack of importance in Chinese foreign policy compared to other areas such as Africa and the Middle East (which produce immediate and significant contributions to their continued economic development and international political influence). China's strategy towards the Arctic, therefore, remains in a 'state of nascent formulation' concerning its views of the region and its role and place within it.⁴ Official Chinese commentary on the Arctic is sparse, but Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Ming's October 2015 speech at an international conference in Iceland signalled China's desire to become an involved regional actor vice a passive observer.⁵ The Arctic is a long-term focus for Beijing, due to the intersection of the region with a number of Chinese interests, including: the climatic impacts upon Asia due to the changing ecology of the North; the opening up of resource extraction prospects, shipping lanes, and fishing grounds; and a venue within which China to project influence as a great power. Despite the lack of official documentation and commentary, scholars generally agree that there are three major trajectories Beijing is pursuing to build deeper relations in the Arctic: scientific research; trade and economic partnerships; and involvement in the regional political architecture.⁶

As a large, rising power with *uncertain* (or at least *undeclared* or *not fully formed*) intentions, views, and strategies for the region, China's engagement in the Arctic warrants investigation. Those most concerned with the detrimental effects of this phenomenon upon Canadian Arctic sovereignty and security are correct in emphasizing China's regional engagement is no longer a hypothetical, but a reality, and it will not be a passing fad.⁷ With that in mind, however, accounts of the challenges to Canada's interests in the Arctic in general tend to narrowly focus upon and fuse the issues of sovereignty and security together, and

in the process, fixate upon state-based threats, of which China is conceptualized as the latest challenger, conjuring up anxieties that territorial integrity is at risk. Such portrayals not only distort, inflate and simplify China's presence and involvement in the North, but also collapse all of Canada's northern interests under a broad, loosely defined, and greatly exaggerated banner of territorial sovereignty, when in fact, a plethora of diverse but highly interconnected set of interests underpin Ottawa's regional policy which need to form the basis of any holistic assessment of Beijing's impacts to Canada in the Arctic.⁸ However, herein, we will focus upon three broad concerns associated with a more Arctic-oriented and engaged China in terms of their impact upon Canadian sovereignty and regional stability:

- Possible maritime sovereignty challenges by Beijing over the Northwest Passage and Extended Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claims;
- The motivations and impact of increasing Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) investments and operations in the Canadian Arctic; and
- Chinese attempts to obstruct and/or restructure the regional political order.

Maritime Sovereignty Challenges?

China has no territorial claims in the Arctic, and has avoided comment on any of the outstanding maritime claims between the Arctic coastal states. Beijing, furthermore, has accepted the Nuuk Criteria as a pre-condition for gaining entry into the Arctic Council, which includes respecting the sovereignty and sovereign rights of the Arctic states, as well as acknowledging the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as the legal regime of the region.⁹ Even the most pessimistic assessments of China's intentions towards the Arctic acknowledge there is no evidence of a territorial revisionist strategy unfolding, but suspect Beijing has kept the door open to employ legal and political tools to limit and dilute Arctic coastal states sovereign rights over maritime regions in the future.¹⁰



The Northwest Passage and its approach lanes, based upon a NASA image.

The major concern in terms of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic is use of the Northwest Passage (NWP). The debate about the NWP is not over who owns the waterways – there is no objection to Canadian ownership – but whether, as Washington asserts,¹¹ the passageways constitute an International Strait establishing Transit Rights for shipping, rather than Internal Waters, as Ottawa claims, which would require shipping to receive prior consent before transiting. Washington and Ottawa have an agreement which respects their opposing legal positions, but in actuality means American shippers will inform Canadian authorities before transits are undertaken.¹² It is unclear whether China, which has stated an interest in using the passageway,¹³ would be willing either to negotiate a similar protocol, or accept Canada's designation of the NWP as Internal Waters.

“The major concern in terms of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic is use of the Northwest Passage (NWP).”

As the world's largest exporter state, China has an interest in securing unobstructed and expeditious shipping movements globally, and may be inclined to side with the American position on this matter. David Curtis Wright, furthermore, speculates Beijing in the future may promote a Svalbard Treaty-like protocol for the NWP, which accepts Canadian sovereignty but also guarantees uninhibited access and transit through the Passage for maritime traffic.¹⁴ Beijing to date, however, has not *proposed* (nor seems *interested in*) the idea, as moving towards such a position would entail clarifying their stance on the status of the Northern Sea Route (controlled by Russia), a traffic route Chinese shippers are far more interested and active in than the NWP.¹⁵

For Chinese shipping companies, a major consideration in altering transit paths is cost savings, which could be substantial, given the shorter distances of the NWP compared to southern routes, but there are significant risks, including the lack of hydrological data and navigation infrastructure, which have tempered Chinese assessments of the benefits of utilizing the Passage.¹⁶ These do not pose a permanent deterrent to Chinese interest in the NWP, but rather, provide further justification for Ottawa to invest in an Arctic shipping corridor program by positioning navigation and search and rescue assets, as well as reliable hydrographic and meteorological information along these routes, and thereby offering incentives for shippers to report to Canadian authorities.¹⁷ Unlike Russia and its Northern Sea Route, however, Canada is not promoting the NWP as an international shipping route, and it may be averse to creating

such a system which would *enable* and therefore *encourage* further usage. With yearly transits increasing 144% since 2004 (mostly due to tourism),¹⁸ Canada must prepare for increased use of the NWP and thus be willing to negotiate protocols with Beijing (and other shipping states).¹⁹ The aim of these actions should not be conditioned upon ascertaining their legal acceptance of Canada's Internal Waters designation, but to build rules and regulations – and be able to enforce them – which protect shipping, the ecology of the region, and those who inhabit it. To that end, Canada must continue to work with both Arctic states and shipping-intensive countries in producing new shipping rules and regulations for the region, such as the recent work through the International Maritime Organization (of which China is a member), which was successful in the creation of the Polar Code that took effect this year.



Reuters/China Stringer Network/RTX/INWV

Shipping containers on a vessel docked at Rizhao, Shandong province, China, 6 December 2015.

Another area of possible contestation is Beijing's ambivalence towards the Extended EEZ claims of Canada (and other Arctic states), although Ottawa is still completing its formal submission.²⁰ It is understandable that China would prefer minimizing Extended EEZ claims (for if accepted by the UNCLOS regulatory body allows states ownership of developing the resources within this water space), in order to retain a greater portion of the Arctic Ocean as the 'High Seas' and 'Common Heritage of Humanity,' as defined by UNCLOS. However, it does not follow that they are willing to legally or otherwise challenge these claims, especially considering their own ambiguity of the extent and rights of their Extended EEZ claims in the South China Sea, an area of far more importance currently for Chinese leaders. Would Beijing issue a definitive legal position on these matters in the Arctic, thereby tying their hands legally in the South China Sea considering their current strategy for that region is to remain legally ambivalent about the nature of their maritime claims while ensuring effective occupation of disputed islets? Comparisons between ongoing maritime disputes in the Arctic and the South China Sea, specifically China's views and strategies for each, must acknowledge the significant geopolitical distinctions between them, including the fact China is a *user state* in the former case, vice a *coastal one* in the latter, and the *peaceful nature* of these disputes in the Arctic, as opposed to the military buildups defining those in the South China Sea. As over 75% of the suspected undiscovered oil and gas reserves in the Arctic²¹ are within undisputed territorial and maritime sovereign realms of the Arctic coastal states, Beijing has little to gain by being obstructionist towards both the Extended EEZ claims of Arctic states and the determination mechanisms outlined in UNCLOS. They, however, have a lot to lose in terms of souring relations with the region and raising further doubts of their commitment to UNCLOS as one of the foundational legal regimes of the international system, which benefits Beijing immensely as the world's largest exporter state.

China's Arctic Economic Endeavours: The Strategic Buyer Approach

Some commentators have argued that China has adopted a 'Strategic Buyer' approach towards the Arctic region, as Chinese companies, specifically, State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), move to secure increasing share holdings of Western companies, joint ventures, and purchasing of natural resources through special partnerships.²² Attempting to seize territory or resources in the Arctic is not practical, thus, Beijing looks to utilize its SOEs to *gain entry into* and *operate within* domestic confines and regulatory schemes to become important stakeholders influencing government decision-making. SOEs, therefore, are not simply seeking new areas of growth and profit, but are under the explicit direction of Beijing forming an important aspect of their resource diplomacy to establish economic dominance as an investor and trading partner in Arctic economies.²³ Within such a position, China could leverage economic ties for political gain, which, in part, may explain the Nordic countries' support of their Permanent Observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013.

Alongside legitimate concerns about the political relationship between Beijing and Chinese SOEs, there are fears these entities will import poor labour and environmental practices employed in other resource-rich and loosely-regulated areas in which they are active (specifically Africa) which could have horrendous consequences for the sparsely-populated and ecologically-sensitive Canadian Arctic. Another apprehension is the strategic implications of increasing trade relations – highlighted by China's conditioning of further free-trade talks on Ottawa restructuring investment rules and building a pipeline to the British Columbia coast, which are controversial domestically²⁴– being used by Beijing as a tool of economic coercion in any diplomatic dispute, as illustrated by its temporary cessation of relations with Norway following the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo.

Greater economic ties with China raise regional as well as strategic challenges, but Ottawa has taken some action to minimize these risks while finding portals for further engagement with the world's second largest economy. First, Ottawa has enacted tough laws on SOEs since one of China's biggest state enterprises – the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) – purchased Canadian oil company Nexen in 2012. This undoubtedly was a blow to Beijing, but Chinese companies have shown a willingness to abide by stronger regulations as they look to invest in not only *lucrative* but *politically stable* countries such as Canada, even among grumblings that regulations are too strict and not clear.²⁵ Chinese SOEs, as well, have begun to change their corporate image, including ownership and management relations, to ease Western concerns of political interference by Beijing.²⁶ As also outlined in the Northern Strategy, Canada emphasizes that external actors must respect the indigenous peoples who live in the Arctic – and their representation in regional institutions – ensuring Beijing (and others) understand the region is a *homeland* and not simply an *economic or strategic arena*; a condition China accepted as part of the Nuuk Criteria in order to be admitted as a Permanent Observer in the Arctic Council.

The possibility of becoming beholden to Chinese interests as they wedge themselves into the Canadian Arctic economically (with current investments estimated at over \$400 million²⁷) must not be taken lightly. However, instead of restricting access to the market due to fear, Ottawa should be constructing a more competitive environment, underpinned by a strong regulatory framework, by encouraging the involvement of other economic partners such as Japan and South Korea, who are also interested in the region. Rhetoric of China's impending economic dominance, however, rarely is accompanied by actual statistics of the rate and intensity of their investments and economic operations in Canada (and other Arctic states),²⁸ and thus, such narratives are more *hypothetical conjecture* than *detailed analyses* of Chinese commercial holdings, activities, and political influence accrued as a result.

Finally, China's willingness to retaliate economically against states during disputes has by and large been short term, with Beijing's economic engagements not conditioned exclusively upon obtaining favourable political concessions from trading partners.

“Rhetoric of China’s impending economic dominance, however, rarely is accompanied by actual statistics of the rate and intensity of their investments and economic operations in Canada...”

Top Photo Corporation/Alamy Live News/Alamy Stock Photo/G3MF3Y



Emergency drills for firefighting/oil spills at wharf of China National Offshore Oil Corporation, Sanya, Hainan province, China, 13 June 2016.

The denial of Chinese investments projects in Iceland and Norway over concerns of possible connections to the Chinese military did not lead to any major repercussions by Beijing.²⁹ This demonstrates the ability of Arctic states to exercise diligence against suspicious Chinese entities and practices without jeopardizing the entire relationship.

Challenging the Regional Order

Perhaps the gravest concern with respect to China's involvement in the Arctic is at the strategic level. Some commentators argue that China is playing a long 'con game,' acting as a non-threatening entity presently, but in reality, it is positioning itself for an eventual revisionist challenge, seeking opportunities to marginalize the Arctic states and their decision-making authority.³⁰ While showing deference presently to the Arctic states, China self-identifies as a 'Near Arctic State' and 'Arctic Stakeholder,' but remains ambiguous as to *how* and *to what degree* it thinks it should be involved in the regional political order. As the region's importance to China augments, Beijing may become more vocal and active in promoting its polar rights and interests, falling in line with the more 'assertive' tone and posture Beijing has adopted towards 'core national interests' in its foreign policy.³¹

The rationale underpinning a possible Chinese revisionist strategy in the Arctic is well-covered academic terrain, but there are few specifics on how this process would unfold, and with

what mechanisms. One speculation, however, is the employment of the Chinese military as Beijing develops polar-capable naval and air assets (including nuclear powered submarines³²) as part of its comprehensive military modernization efforts.³³ The presence of a Chinese naval task group in the fall of 2015 off the coast of Alaska fueled concerns that Beijing may use its burgeoning naval capability to promote, perhaps aggressively, its ambitions, interests, and status as a polar power. Chinese naval vessels, for example, could be employed in the Arctic to not only demonstrate an ability to operate in the region, but also to signal Beijing's position on the nature and extent of Canada's and other Arctic states' sovereign realms and authority at sea.

Narratives of a polar revisionist China usually depict the Arctic as a particularly vulnerable region, and criticize political leaders' persistent under-appreciation of the changing strategic landscape and resolve to ensure Canadian sovereignty and security are appropriately defended in this new environment.³⁴ China's entrance, according to this line of thinking, is *driven by* and *contributes towards* an already stressed geopolitical region as competition over resources and sovereignty at sea has motivated the development of increased military forces in the region (framed in the often used but ill-defined 'militarization' nomenclature³⁵). These frictions, it is predicted, will continue to grow, and as a result, erode the regional political architecture, which was designed during the peaceful geopolitical environment of the 1990s, that is not equipped to deal with the emergence of an ultra-competitive and possibly adversarial landscape.³⁶



DND photo by Corporal Chris Ringius

HMCS Kingston in the Davis Strait in search of the Lost Franklin Expedition, 2014.

Forecasts, however, of the region becoming a geostrategic flashpoint punctuated by resource scrambles, contestations over sovereign realms, and possibly, arms races, are narratives which have a long historical lineage in popular accounts of the North, despite their failure to materialize in any meaningful way.³⁷ Even if China harbours revisionist intents, the pathways and process Beijing would employ are shaped by the forces and factors underpinning the current regional order. The Arctic is a stable region characterized by a rule-bound regime of developed countries (including the homelands of two nuclear powers), the absence of war and failed states, and the promotion of regional norms of cooperation and consensus within an inclusive political architecture.³⁸ The Arctic regime should not be dismissed out of hand as ill-equipped to deal with a new strategic environment, for it has demonstrated an ability to do so (most importantly, in the early-to-mid-2000s) by adequately thickening institutional bodies, norms, and signaling of intent in order to dispel and discredit possible destabilizing competition between them.³⁹ This confluence of factors in the Arctic may make it one of the more successful regions in stemming the excesses of geopolitical competition, as exemplified by the maintenance of cordial regional relations despite heightened tensions between the West/NATO and Russia. It is not, therefore, the absence of drivers and sources of geopolitical rivalry (including emanating from other regions) which explains the continuation

“This does not preclude geopolitical competition playing an increasingly important and contentious role in the region.”

of the Arctic Peace, but rather, the resiliency and adaptability of the regional political regime to promote and ascertain acceptance by involved actors that the current political architecture is in their respective national interests to support, or at a minimum, to not oppose.⁴⁰

This does not preclude geopolitical competition playing an increasingly important and contentious role in the region. Greenland, in transition away from Danish rule, and with abundant natural resources, is the most likely place China may try to create a regional partner or possible ally.⁴¹ These pressures are already motivating European states to enhance relations with Nuuk to ensure that, even if independent, Greenland remains a firm regional and military ally with the West. However, the impact of the structural power configurations and institutional characteristics of the region on the calculus of Beijing is largely under-appreciated, especially in analyses which assume China is taking more risks and becoming over-confident, considering that all of the region’s principal actors, including Russia,⁴² have some degree of strategic suspicion towards China.

The expanding reach and ability to operate in a variety of operational environments of the Chinese navy is commensurate with Beijing’s goal of becoming a maritime power, but it remains far from certain it would be employed (let alone in a confrontational

manner) in the Arctic, as its expeditionary operations up to now have been peaceful and usually undertaken in support of global security operations. Beijing’s use of military assets in maritime disputes in the East and South China Seas demonstrates a desire to minimize the possibility of American primacy influencing the eventual resolution of the disputes, as well as broader regional security and political issues. But the use of/threat of force in Asia does not necessarily indicate a willingness to employ these tactics in other regions where such territorial interests are absent, especially considering that both the United States and Russia reside in this region.⁴³ The deployment of naval assets, however, may be to probe and gauge American and others’ positions with respect to foreign military vessels operating in their EEZs (which is authorized under UNCLOS), considering China is opposed to others doing the same in its maritime spaces. At present, however, there is no indication Beijing views the Arctic as a military arena within which to expand their power and presence, nor is it prioritizing the development of polar-capable assets in their modernization plans.

Contextualizing Concerns of China’s Arctic Entrance

Assessments that a growing Chinese presence in the Arctic could compromise Canadian Northern sovereignty and security tend to rely upon larger global analyses of Beijing’s actions and intents as becoming more revisionist as it becomes a great power, more than upon China’s actual current activities in the Arctic. The ‘Assertive China’ narrative, in particular, has become a dominate paradigm in the West, characterizing

Beijing as both increasingly *unsatisfied with* and *having a capability and willingness to obstruct and/or challenge* global configurations of power. Determining Beijing’s commitment or opposition to the current international order – encompassed in the ‘status-quo/revisionist power’ debate – is heavily influenced by a number of competing schools of thought from the discipline of International Relations Theory, particularly structural-based theories concerning periods of power transition between established and rising powers, and the forces that promote either stability or conflict during these times. Attempts to fit China into this mutually-exclusive categorization appears to be an exercise more designed to demonstrate the legitimacy of these concepts than towards a tool to understand Chinese foreign policy, in part, perhaps, to privilege parsimonious analysis in an effort to provide advice and guidance to policy makers and the public, *writ large*.⁴⁴ These ideas heavily influence the framing of China’s Arctic endeavors by assigning revisionist intent to Beijing, and thus interpreting their actions as at a minimum an attempt to obstruct and undermine rules and norms to achieve narrowly-defined interests (i.e. weaken domestic and regional regulatory and decision-making systems to gain access to resources and markets), and at worse, a comprehensive strategy to alter the regional political landscape geopolitically towards its advantage (i.e. creation of alternative institutional bodies to redistribute decision-making powers). The concept of revisionism, however, is usually poorly operationalized and loosely defined to the point where any action on the part of Beijing falls under this categorization, calling into question whether such a classification schema is



Ginny Scholes Photography/Alamy Stock Photo/EABXFC

The Buchan Gulf, Baffin Island, in Arctic Canada.



Frozen sea and tanker ship at night, 28 September 2015.

useful in understanding China's interests and interactions with the regional order, which itself is not a static entity, but is evolving over time.

Characterizations of China as a new and destabilizing participant in an emerging Arctic geopolitical battleground tend to over-emphasize the certainty, abilities, and confidence of Beijing to remake regional dynamics, while under-estimating the resiliency and adaptability of the regional architecture to diffuse areas of possible tensions and socialize its members into supporting a stable political environment. Despite the existence of some Chinese academic and media discussions calling for a more assertive strategy,⁴⁵ Beijing's actions have been conducted through legal and accepted channels, including participating at a low and non-intrusive level in the regional political architecture. Furthermore, China's interests in the Arctic align with its broader foreign policy goals of diversifying energy and resources suppliers, securing trade routes, and becoming more active in global and regional governance instruments commensurate with its growing great power status and role. Viewed in isolation, therefore, Beijing's activities in the Arctic appear to have augmented markedly, when in fact, the region remains a low priority and is more a reflection of China's rise as a major power searching for partnerships, influence, and access to markets and resources throughout the international system at large, rather than a surgical and targeted approach to turn the North into a new 'core national interest.'

Another contributing factor to the portrayal of China as a polar revisionist power is the apparent need for a threat narrative in order to have a sustained public discussion on the region, evident in the persistent inability of successive Canadian governments to develop a strategy for sustained investment and interest in the North.⁴⁶ Speculations of a more muscular Chinese approach towards the region are the latest justifications for increased Canadian military and constabulary forces in the Arctic.⁴⁷ These deficiencies, however, pre-date China's interest in the region and would continue to be criticized in their absence. Nonetheless, it is easier to conceptualize state-based rather than non-state based threats in generating sustained public interest and debate, even though the latter is of a more real and immediate challenge than the former.

Furthermore, a fixation on the possible deployment (overtly or covertly) of Chinese military forces to the region confuses potentialities with probabilities, and may detract resources and efforts towards the more realistic and immediate challenges confronting Canadian defence and security in the Arctic, which pertain largely to societal-level, constabulary matters vice state-based, military threats.⁴⁸ While political and military leaders must be mindful of all possible defence and security challenges, in reality, prioritization for resourcing and planning for the Canadian Armed Forces in the Arctic must be *suitable*, given the nature of the threat in the region, and *sustainable*, due to the unique regional factors which make force development, deployment and projection significant challenges.⁴⁹ It is not, however, that state-based threats should

not be prepared for – particularly with respect to enhancing surveillance to increase domain awareness (including sub-surface) – but rather, to ensure they do not consume the entirety of the security discussion of the most pressing issues in the Arctic and derail development of capabilities which are needed in the current threat environment.

Conclusion

China presents a numbers of challenges to Canada and its interests, but rather than reluctantly accommodating Beijing out of resignation that attempts to do otherwise are futile, there needs to be acknowledgment that a greater Chinese presence in the Arctic has many potential benefits. These benefits include having a strong partner in scientific research and investment, as well as legitimizing the regional order by including external actors. This does not preclude revisionist intentions on the part of Beijing, the political motives and decision-making processes of which remain shrouded in uncertainty, but to assume China’s intentions are fixed, unmovable, and hostile may unnecessarily exacerbate regional relations at a critical moment when Arctic states – including Canada as a self-proclaimed Arctic power – must show leadership in building pathways for its inclusion. China’s regional involvement is part of a larger process of the internationalization of the region,⁵⁰ in which Ottawa’s focus

“Reconciling the need to find pathways for deeper engagement with China while mitigating risks and building capacities to manage differences is being advocated by a number of prominent Canadian scholars.”

should remain upon achieving consensus between the Arctic states and external actors in managing the complex and growing human and environmental security matters affecting the region, vice military build-ups and sovereignty-anxiety based rhetoric to counter Beijing’s Arctic arrival. Simple characterizations must be avoided, both as they relate to Chinese intentions and impact (of which the emergence of various academic camps on this issue, in order to differentiate from each other, sometimes promote), and of China as a monolithic entity in complete control of its citizenry and economic companies operating abroad, although its influence is greater over them as compared to other states, specifically its State-Owned Enterprises.

Reconciling the need to find pathways for deeper engagement with China while mitigating risks and building capacities to manage differences is being advocated by a number of prominent Canadian scholars. They advocate facilitating a more balanced and nuanced public debate and informed government approach to relations with Beijing, much as Australia has accomplished recently.⁵¹ Increasing Chinese activity in the Arctic, and the possible impact upon Canada, is the latest and most visible rationale for such a dialogue on the relationship, which *is* and *will continue to be* complicated and complex.



US Navy photo/Alamy Stock Photo/ESP899

HMCS *Calgary*, foreground, and Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) Navy *Luyang II* Class destroyer *Haikou* during Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise, 25 July 2014.

NOTES

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2. David Curtis Wright, "The Panda Bear Readies to Meeting the Polar Bear: China and Canada's Arctic Sovereignty Challenge," *The Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute*, March 2011.
3. For an example of such an argument, see: Rob Huebert, "Why a Defence Review is Necessary and Why It Will Be Easy to Get the Arctic Wrong," in *Canadian Naval Review*, 2016, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 22-26.
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9. "Arctic Council Rules of Procedures," in *The Arctic Council*, 15 May 2013, Annex 2: Accreditation and Review of Observers: 7 Criteria for Determining Observer Status," at https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/940/2015-09-01_Rules_of_Procedure_website_version.pdf?sequence=1.
10. David Curtis Wright, "The Panda Bear Readies to Meet the Polar Bear: China and Canada's Arctic Sovereignty Challenge."
11. For a detailed explanation of the American position, see: James Kraska, "The Law of the Sea Convention and the Northwest Passage," in *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, 2007, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 257-281. See also: Michael Byers, *Who Owns the Arctic: Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North* (Madeira Park, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2009), specifically, Chapters 3-5.
12. The Agreement on Arctic Cooperation, signed by Canada and the United States in 1988, states that US icebreakers conducting transits through the NWP shall seek the consent of the Government of Canada prior to transit, but which will always be accepted. This agreement does not include other types of vessels, but since its enactment, no other US government vessel has traversed the NWP, with the possible exception of submarines doing so covertly.
13. Nathan Vanderklippe, "China Reveals Plan to Ship Cargo Across Canada's Northwest Passage," in *The Globe and Mail*, 20 April 2016, at <https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/china-reveals-plans-to-ship-cargo-across-canadas-northwest-passage/article29691054/>
14. David Curtis Wright, "The Dragon Eyes the Top of the World: Arctic Policy Debates and Discussion in China," p. 35. The Svalbard Treaty, which entered into force in 1925, is an international agreement between 42 states that recognizes the sovereignty of Norway over the island group, but limits the full exercising of this authority as it also enshrines the rights of the citizens of the respective signatory states to engage in commercial and scientific activities on the islands and in their territorial waters.
15. As with the NWP, Beijing remains ambivalent about its *de jure* position on the designation of the NSR, but in reality, accepts Russian ownership as internal waters. Andreas Kuersten, "Russian Sanctions, China, and the Arctic," in *The Diplomat*, 3 January 2015, at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/russian-sanctions-china-and-the-arctic/>.
16. Frédéric Lasserre, Lyin Huang, and Olga Alexeeva, "Is China's Interest for the Arctic Driven by Arctic Shipping Potential?," in *Asian Geographer*, 2015, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 59-71.
17. "The Integrated Arctic Corridors Framework," *The PEW Charitable Trusts*, 26 April 2016.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Beijing may not want to commit to prior consent, but rather, to simply advise Canada of its passage. In such a scenario, if Beijing shippers are in accordance with international and domestic shipping regulations, Canada could guarantee acceptance of such transits under these pre-conditions. Frédéric Lasserre, furthermore, asserts that researchers from the Polar Research Institute of China, China's pre-eminent organization responsible for Polar expeditions, have told him that in any future transits of the NWP, they shall inform Canadian authorities beforehand. Frédéric Lasserre, Linyan Huang and Olga Alexeeva, "China's Strategy in the Arctic: Threatening or Opportunistic?," in *Polar Record*, 2015, at <https://corpus.ulaval.ca/jspui/bitstream/20.500.11794/876/1/China%20Arctic%20opportunistic%20Polar%20Record%20OA%20FL%20LH%202015.pdf>.
20. Assessments that Beijing may come to dispute Extended EEZ claims of the Arctic states does not derive from official positions or declarations but rather stems from some non-official commentary, including the often cited assertions of a former Chinese admiral in 2010 that China, as representing one-fifth of the world's population, must be active in securing the designation of the Arctic Ocean as the 'Common Heritage of Humankind,' which does not belong exclusively to the Arctic states (Jakobson and Peng, p. 15). Besides the uncertainty as to whether these views are held by Chinese leaders, such a line of argument is more likely in response to any possible re-assertion of Sector Theory (as once promoted by Russia) of dividing the Arctic Ocean into territorial sea-like domains governed by the Arctic coastal states, than opposing Extended EEZ claims.
21. Dag Harald Claes and Arild Moe, "Arctic Petroleum Resources in a Regional and Global Perspective," in *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamics in a Global World*, Rolf Tannes and Kristine Offerdal, (Eds.) (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 97-120.
22. Timothy Curtis Wright, "China's New Arctic Strategem: The Strategic Buyer's Approach to the Arctic," in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 2013, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 1-36; Hubert, "Canada and China in the Arctic: A Work in Progress."
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24. "China Open to Historic Free-Trade Deal with Canada Under Certain Provisos," in *The Globe and Mail*, 15 January 2016, at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/china-open-to-historic-free-trade-deal-with-canada-under-certain-provisos/article28208595/>.
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26. Wendy Dobson and Paul Evans, "The Future of Canada's Relationship with China," *Institute for Research on Public Policy*, December 2015, p. 12.
27. James Munsom, "China North: Canada's Resources and China's Arctic Long Game," in *iPolitics*, 31 December 2012.
28. The fact, for example, that Canada and Australian companies each have larger investment profiles in Greenland vice their Chinese counterparts is absent in such commentaries. Klaus Dodds, and Mark Nutall, *The Scramble for the Poles* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2016), p. 143.
29. Marc Lanteigne, p. 15.
30. Roger W. Robinson Jr., "China's 'Long Con' in the Arctic," *Macdonald-Laurier Institute*, September 2013; James Munsom, "China North: Canada's Resources and China's Arctic Long Game."
31. David Curtis Wright, "The Dragons Eyes the Top of the World: Arctic Policy Debate and Discussion in China," p. 38.
32. Mark Romanow, "Submarine Proliferation and the Impact for Canada," in *Frontline Defence*, 2016, Vol. 13, No. 4, pp. 28-34.
33. Caution must be employed, however, in distinguishing assets which are polar capable and those which are developed specifically for polar missions. For example, the recent commissioning of a military icebreaker by the Chinese Navy is a continuation of an existing capability tasked with ensuring the navigability of the Bohai Sea (an important economic region along the Chinese coastline) during the winter, and not a new requirement with the intention of using them in the Polar regions, although they could be used in such a capacity. "China Launches a New Icebreaker," in *Popular Mechanics*, 7 January 2016, at <http://www.popularmechanics.com/military/weapons/news/a18867/china-launches-new-icebreaker/>.
34. Rob Huebert, "Why a Defence Review is Necessary and Why It Will Be Easy to Get the Arctic Wrong."

35. Abhijit Singh, "The Creeping Militarization of the Arctic," in *The Diplomat*, 16 October 2013, at <http://thediplomat.com/2013/10/the-creeping-militarization-of-the-arctic/>; Rob Huebert, "The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment," *Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute*, March 2010. For counter-arguments to the militarization of the Arctic portrayal, see: Adam P. MacDonald, "The Militarization of the Arctic: Emerging Reality, Exaggerations and Distraction," in *Canadian Military Journal*, Summer 2015, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 18-28; Paal Sigurd Hilde, "The 'new' Arctic – The Military Dimension," in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 2013, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 130-153.
36. Scott G. Borgerson, "Arctic Melttdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 2, pp. 73-77; James Graff, "Arctic: Fight For the Top of the World," in *Time Magazine*, 1 October 2007, at <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1663848,00.html>.
37. Rolf Tamnes and Sven G. Holtsmark, (Eds.) "The Geopolitics of the Arctic in Historical Perspective," in *Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: Regional Dynamics in a Global World*, Rolf Tamnes and Kristine Offerdal, New York: Routledge, 2014, pp. 12-48; Dodds and Nutall, *Scramble for the Poles*, pp. 14-17.
38. Wegge Nord, "The Political Order in the Arctic: Power, Structures, Regimes and Influence," in *Polar Record*, 2011, Vol. 241, pp. 165-176.
39. The mid-2000s were defined by the planting of a Russian flag on the bottom of the ocean at the North Pole; the resumption of Russian bomber and naval patrols in the Arctic; the re-ignition of the political dispute between Canada and Denmark over the ownership of Hans Island (including the dispatching of warships and political representatives to assert sovereign claim over the barren rock); and the building up and stationing of military forces in the region by all the Arctic states. Such developments, however, while usually overblown both in terms of their *impact* and *intent*, created a popular portrayal of the region as being on the brink of conflict. In part to allay such concerns, the Arctic coastal states issued the Ilulissat Declaration, confirming their intent to resolve outstanding maritime sovereignty disputes peacefully through UNCLOS, which was affirmed as the legal regime of the region.
40. Adam P. MacDonald, "Arctic Politics: From Stable to Scramble," in *Frontline Defence*, 2016, Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 52-56.
41. The growth of Chinese economic interest and activity in Greenland is being monitored by Danish intelligence, which assess that the strategic importance of the relationship will increase as China comes to see the Arctic as an important source of resources. "Intelligence Risk Assessment 2015," *Danish Defence Intelligence Service*, 11 November 2015, at <https://fe-ddis.dk/eng/Products/Intelligence-Risk-Assessments/Pages/Intelligence-RiskAssessment-2015.aspx>
42. On the strategic tension with Sino-Russian relations with respect to the Arctic, see: Stephanie Pezard and Timothy Smith, "Friends if We Must: Russia and China in the Arctic," in *War on the Rocks*, 6 May 2016, at <http://warontherocks.com/2016/05/friends-if-we-must-russia-and-chinas-relations-in-the-arctic/>. For the practical challenges of greater Sino-Russian economic cooperation in the Arctic, see: Ekaterina Klimenko, "Russia's Evolving Arctic Strategy," *SIPRI Policy Paper*, September 2014, No. 42.
43. Adam MacDonald, "Enlarging Fleet, Expanding Mandate: China's Determination to Become a Maritime Power," in *Canadian Naval Review*, 2016, Vol. 11, No. 3, pp. 4-9.
44. Adam P. MacDonald, "Access, Assurance and Acceptance: Moving Beyond the Status-Quo/ Revisionist Power Debate in Investigating China's Emerging Foreign Policy Strategy," in *Facing China as a New Global Superpower: Domestic and International Dynamics from a Multidisciplinary Angle*, Huhua Cao and Jeremy Patiel, (Eds.) (New York: Springer, 2016), pp. 171-196.
45. Most observers readily admit that such commentary is not Chinese policy or necessarily reflective of government views, but it is unclear the relationship between such discussions and the ability and extent Beijing regulates, monitors and encourages them. The dampening of provocative statements in Chinese academia and the media with respect to the Arctic in 2011, for example, appears to have been motivated by Beijing's assessment that such commentary had undermined their position to join the Arctic Council with their Permanent Observer application being deferred until 2013. Jakobson and Peng, p. v.
46. P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "Canada and the Asian Observers in the Arctic Council: Anxiety and Opportunity," in *Asia Policy*, July 2014, No. 18, pp. 22-29; P. Whitney Lackenbauer and James Manicom, "Canada's Northern Strategy and East Asian Interests in the Arctic," *The Centre for International Governance and Innovation*, 2013.
47. Levon Sevunts, "Canada's Defence Review and the Arctic," *Radio Canada International*, 8 April 2016, at <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2016/04/08/canadas-defence-review-and-the-arctic/>; Rob Huebert, "Why a Defence Review is Necessary and Why it Will be East to Get the Arctic Wrong."
48. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Adam Lajeunesse, "The Canadian Armed Forces in the Arctic: Building Appropriate Capabilities," in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 2016, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 7-66.
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50. For an overview of this phenomenon, see: Peter Hough, *International Politics of the Arctic: Coming in From the Cold* (New York: Routledge, 2013).
51. Dobson and Evans, "The Future of Canada's Relationship with China;" David Mulroney, *Middle Power Middle Kingdom: What Canadians Need to Know about China in the 21st Century* (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2015).



Young male polar bear at the floe edge with an arctic seagull, Lancaster Sound, Nunavut.



General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City.

The Social Construction of War

by Mitchell Binding

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Introduction

The current resurgence of nationalism and emergence of “post-fact” politics offers an interesting opportunity to study how war is socially constructed.¹ I argue, in line with a constructivist framework, that actors are induced to act based upon a socially constructed reality; this reality is formed by norms and identities. The extent to which war is socially constructed matters most when observing how much actors can manoeuvre within this construct, to which the answer is, very little. I first explain why this question even matters, and clarify concepts that are prerequisite to a comprehensive understanding. I then address the core of this article: the ways that war is socially constructed, and the extent to which this is so. As with any honest analysis, my arguments are then tempered with a discussion of their limitations. Finally, I support my conclusions with a broad overview of case studies, preferring a broad approach to demonstrate the ubiquity of our findings.

Who Cares?

Whether a scholar, practitioner, military officer, activist, political leader or engaged citizen, it is instructive to reflect upon war as a social construct. The dialogue regarding international relations (IR) has fixated largely upon realist and liberal mindsets. Both paradigms offer many contributions to the field. Realism offers a pleasing straight-forward logic, and is supported by examples throughout the historical record.² Liberalism, and Liberal Democratic Peace theory (LDP) particularly, shares the same “rationalist” foundation as realism, although with some fundamentally different assumptions, offering a different, more optimistic prognosis for global affairs.³ Indeed, modern liberalism has been the bedrock of the Western-led order for most of the last century, and so, it has played no small part in IR. Both approaches have major shortcomings, however. Realists are criticized with ignoring many of the most important factors in the international system.⁴ Liberalism has contributed to the undertaking of many ‘illiberal’ wars in seeking to spread democracy, which many argue has weakened the normative order that the West has sought to uphold.⁵ Both are criticized with having a Western-centric worldview that does not transfer to other perspectives.



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The United States Capitol building in Washington, DC.

By reflecting upon how IR theory is instead *constitutive*, we understand that actors' conceptions of war and peace form the environment within which they act.⁶ This is important because it changes how we understand *why* things happen in the international system, and *how* best to address them – an endeavor that seems relevant, given the changing political and normative environment around the globe today.

Concepts

The first issue is to clarify the term 'socially constructed.' Actors cannot separate themselves from the system within which they act. In the constructivist view, there is a difference between material and non-material factors, or 'brute facts' and 'social facts.'⁷ It is the non-material or ideational factors that shape the international system and the way actors and states interact.

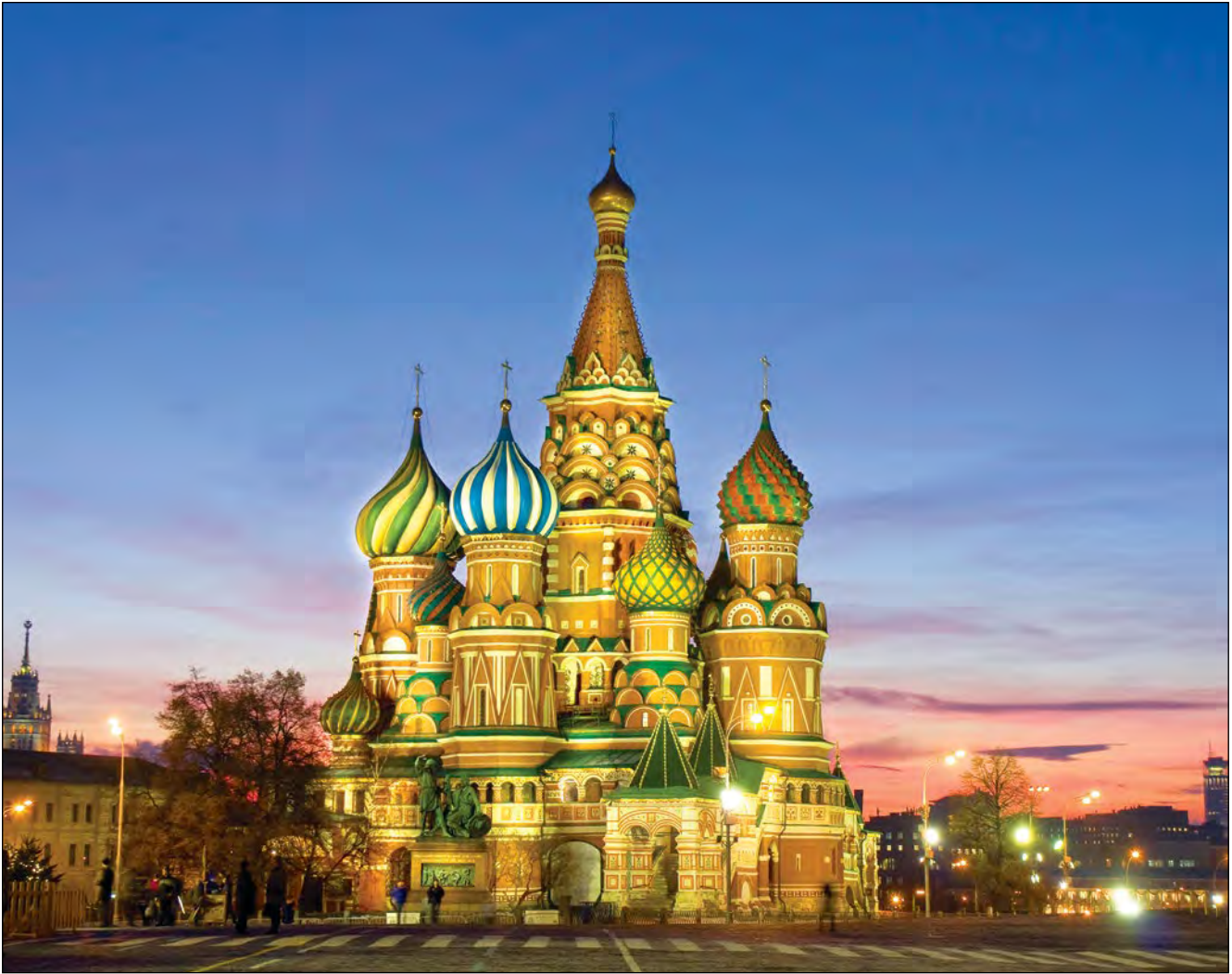
The ideas, norms, and cultures of actors and states are what create war. To be clear, this view does not hold war as 'non-real,' or something that can be wished away by changing how we think.⁸ As will be discussed in more depth later, anarchy, war, and other major elements of the international system are created by ideas, norms, and cultures that constitute an 'intersubjective medium,' whereby the actions of each actor and state affect those of every other.⁹ Because these normative constructions have been acted out, interpreted,

and reinforced countless times across centuries, they are virtually hard-wired into the international system.

So then, why not simply adopt a rationalist approach? This is no small question, but the short answer is that in doing so, theorists and practitioners exclude a considerable amount of nuance. Not only do they misunderstand key aspects of the international system (i.e., lacking understanding of the end of the Cold War and its reasons), but they also say little about terrorism, international crime, migrant crises, environmental issues, gendered politics, domestic politics, or really anything not at the interstate level.¹⁰ These issues have all played increasingly important roles in IR, and rationalist approaches ignore them to their detriment.

“So, after criticizing the two primary rationalist paradigms in IR, it is necessary to provide an alternative.”

So, after criticizing the two primary rationalist paradigms in IR, it is necessary to provide an alternative. The answer to many of the above issues, and to the stated research question, is tackled best by constructivist thinkers and the English School. These two schools of thought share similarities in their thinking, with some important differences.¹¹ The primary difference between the two relates to their approaches: constructivists see through a socio-political lens, while the English School prefers to view through a historical lens. Generally, however, the two have similar ideas regarding the role of ideas and norms in interstate relations, and indeed, some scholars have been working to merge the two schools.



St. Basil's Intercession Cathedral in Moscow.

The most important concepts in this 'third way' – constructivism, rooted in the English School – are those of norms, identity, and culture. To constructivists, these fundamentals are responsible for the construction of international society and its constituent parts, such as anarchy, peace, diplomacy, and war.¹²

War as Social Construct

To understand war as a social construct, we need also to understand how states themselves are social constructs. The material aspects of a state are apparent: its territory, population, economy, and materiel are all indisputable aspects of the state.¹³ States are also created and defined by ideas (capitalism, democracy, communism), cultures (religious, secular, ethnic), and norms (rule of law, revanchist, conciliatory).¹⁴ Social construction is further illustrated by examining how a state could exist without territory, or territory without state (governments can operate in exile or while occupied).¹⁵ As the international system changes, states' borders adapt and sometimes cease to exist altogether, even though its material properties are still intact in some capacity.¹⁶ The *people* as constituting a state can be questioned as well; the identities and cultures that

constitute a state are often not homogenous, and often do conflict. Cultures regularly exist across state lines, and are often one of several within borders.¹⁷ The state can, in fact, be observed as the formulation of three distinct but critical parts; the territory and material factors make up only one part, with the other two being the 'idea of the state' and the 'institutional expression of the state.'¹⁸ This trinity illustrates how material factors are only a part of that which comprises a state.

Viewing the state as a social construct influences how we observe the relations between them. These relations, as well, are influenced and often constituted by norms. If states are themselves constructs, then the anarchical structure that they comprise is also socially constructed.¹⁹ Norms are both regulative and constitutive; norms *regulate* the conduct of war (such as the United Nations charter and alliance treaties), yet without the rules and norms that *constitute* war, it would cease to exist altogether.²⁰

This connection is described by the concept of agent-structure. Political scientist Alexander Wendt, one of the core social constructivist scholars in the field of IR, explains that 'regular practices produce mutually constituting sovereign identities (agents) and

their associated institutional norms (structures).²¹ In other words, the agents in a system, in aggregate, create the structure within which they act. The system thereupon influences or regulates actions, which then feed back into the structure. This leads us to the conclusion that states, through their practices, constitute war.

This can be applied in understanding why realist and liberal thought is pervasive. Realism focuses on anarchy and the balance of power (or threat) and the systemic pressures that this places upon actors; if most actors in the world understand it to be Hobbesian in nature, then they will all act in a zero-sum, distrustful manner in the interest of self-preservation.²² Liberalism sees the same system but allows for norms of cooperation between like-states that make it feasible, through an iterative long-term version of the Prisoner's Dilemma, to break away from eternal conflict.²³ If every actor believes that cooperation among states is not only possible but very beneficial, then all would act accordingly to protect the groups and their own interests. These two discrete worldviews have been *necessary for* and *constitutive of* the conflicts and wars (as well as peace) seen throughout history.²⁴

Questions of Extent

Arguing that war *is* a social construct leads to the conclusion it is socially constructed to the full extent. I will attempt to answer a more fruitful question: to what *extent* can actors *manoeuvre* within this social construction?

As mentioned briefly earlier, the view that war is socially constructed does not mean that it is illusory or intangible, or can

be abandoned at will. The norms that constitute war are pervasive, and are further influenced by feedback from the agent-structure system.²⁵ This means that the extent to which actors can manoeuvre is limited.

The most important consequence of this is that actors essentially must act within a realist system because that is what has been repeatedly constructed.²⁶ Naturally, liberalism still holds ground and LDP is still relevant, but most of history goes to the realists – and we seem currently to be returning to a balance-of-power mentality. For instance, realists have for years predicted the resurgence of a great-power competition-based order once the ‘unipolar’ order began to decline.²⁷ We see this now between Russia, China, and the United States (US). The European Union (EU) is also on fragile ground and faces the serious possibility of disintegration, possibly leading to less friendly competition between Great Britain, France, Germany, and perhaps Italy.²⁸ This is the result of the reification of realist thought in international politics and strategy, and is why actors struggle to manoeuvre within the social construction of war.

Limitations

As with every approach in IR, constructivism comes with limitations. The most relevant involve the often complex nature of the constructivist argument, the difficulty in establishing guidelines for the analysis of norms, and its difficulty in predicting developments in IR. Many have argued that viewing war as socially constructed is overly complex, without any of the attractive simplicity of rationalist approaches (particularly of realism).



Big Ben and Westminster Bridge – London.

Sergey Borisov/Alamy Stock Photo/HWDFG



Chairman Mao Zedong.

Scholars have discussed the immense complexity of the norms and identities at each level of analysis, and how they affect each other in often circular ways.²⁹ These complex normative relationships can make it very difficult to analyze and understand how they constitute a system.

The complexity in studying norms is made no easier by the difficult methodologies that must be adopted to study them. Some scholars have provided methods for analysis, but subjective and ill-defined concepts such as norms, identities, and culture are not easily assessed.³⁰

The *constructivist* approach also struggles to anticipate directions of change, as it is not possible to predict the nature or transmission of ideas, whereas a *rationalist* or *systemic* approach could predict how countries will act based on what the structure dictates.³¹ Security practitioners require a certain applicability of concepts to the real world to devise forward-looking policies. The complexity and unpredictability of norms and ideas could make the constructivist approach less appealing.

Having acknowledged these limitations, it is important to note that none of them negate the reasons for understanding war

“The complexity in studying norms is made no easier by the difficult methodologies that must be adopted to study them.”

Virginia’s Professor Jeffrey W. Legro, another specialist in IR, analyzes the lead-up to the Second World War, disagreeing with traditional arguments, and focusing instead upon how organizational cultures in Britain and Germany inadvertently escalated toward conflict.³⁴ Dr. Elizabeth Kier, an associate professor in

the Department of Political Science at the University of Washington, studies offensive versus defensive doctrines related to French military culture during the interwar years, finding that militaries do not inherently prefer the former.³⁵ Harvard professor Dr. Alastair Iain Johnston discusses the prevalence of cultural realism in China during Mao Zedong’s reign, finding that offensive *realpolitik* has been internalized by Chinese leaders by historical events over centuries.³⁶ Boston University’s IR Professor Thomas U. Berger assesses the tendencies of both Germany and Japan, since the Second World War, to buck the realist trend by being extremely hesitant to resort to military means because of cultural and historical factors.³⁷ Doctors Richard Price (University of British Columbia) and Nina Tannenwald (Brown University) use a normative approach to explain the non-use of chemical and nuclear weapons in instances where the deterrence model does not hold up.³⁸ Then, Dr. Robert G. Herman tackles the fall of the Soviet

as a social construct. Rationalist approaches still fail to understand the normative causes for the structures and institutions that they observe, or their consequences.³² Thus, constructivists do not aim to displace realism or liberalism, but to *collaborate* with them. Some have said that constructivism is not much more than a complement to realism,³³ but it seems more accurate that realism and liberalism could both be subsumed under constructivism.

Overview of Case Studies

For the purposes of this article, a broad sampling of case studies is best suited to demonstrate the application of a constructivist approach to the real world. Such an approach inevitably sacrifices depth; I take a broad overview of both historical and contemporary examples to provide a sense of the many possibilities for applying a social construction understanding to war and IR.

Scholars have written on the role of norms, identity, and culture in numerous cases from the last century. University of

Union, showing that ideational factors led to the end of the Cold War more than material ones.³⁹

The beginning of the current century has provided many case studies as well. We have witnessed the War on Terror and the construction of its narrative on both sides.⁴⁰ As the UK departs the EU and hastens its demise, and the US nationalistically turns inward and away from its allies, the world witnesses the incipient decline of the Western-led order.⁴¹ The vacuum is filled by two resurgent great powers: Russia rejects the normative hegemony of the West and so acts aggressively to attain former glory, while China looks to re-establish itself as the powerful Middle Kingdom.⁴²

Much of the change we have seen over the last several years has nought to do with changes in material capabilities (although China and Russia have been building and utilizing new-found material strengths). The changes have come from ideational factors: nationalism and populism are on the march across the West as a result of disenfranchisement with elites and globalization.⁴³ Russia's fall from super power status, and China's cultural memory of its "century of humiliation" drive both of these countries.⁴⁴

Many cases will resemble realist situations. For example, relations between the US and China will likely decline, and may

fall into Thucydides' Trap, whereby rising powers and established hegemony come to inevitable conflict.⁴⁵ But this is not necessarily the case; it is just as possible that more peaceable ideas take hold. The breadth of case studies surveyed here supports the claim that war is socially constructed, and so realist conceptions will not necessarily hold.

“The breadth of case studies surveyed here supports the claim that war is socially constructed, and so, realist conceptions will not necessarily hold.”

Conclusion

Realism and liberalism have long dominated the dialogue in IR, but they are both limited in their power to understand war, since neither pays due attention to the importance of norms, identities and cultures. These factors constitute the actors, states, and structure of the international system, and so are crucial for a comprehensive understanding – even more so when considering what the most important security issues facing Canada are today. This constructivist

approach provides essential nuance when approaching terrorism, international crime, migrant crises, environmental issues, and the myriad other complexities to which we will contribute our best solutions. Utilizing a constructivist approach, the global normative environment will be interesting to study over the coming years as the world faces fundamental changes.

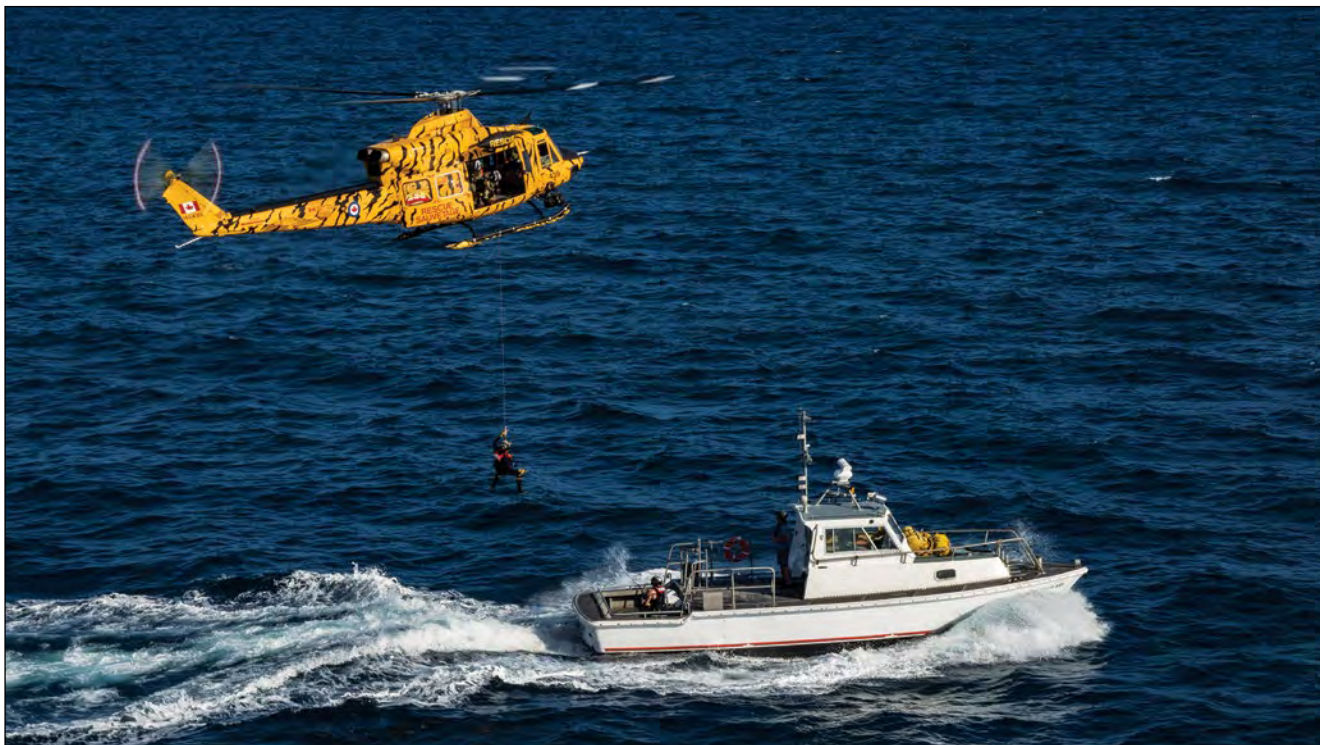


Secretariat Building at United Nations Headquarters.

United Nations Multimedia photo #715035

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DND photo CK04-2017-0082-014 by Corporal Bryan Carter

A Search and Rescue technician is lowered from a CH-146 *Griffon* helicopter onto a simulated vessel in distress off the coast of Miami, Florida, during Exercise *Southern Breeze*, 8 February 2017.

In Need of Rescue: Canadian Search and Rescue Policy

by James Pierotti

Major James Pierotti, CD, MA, is an Air Combat Systems Officer currently posted to the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre. He has five tours within the SAR community, either flying in the CC-130 Hercules in the SAR role, or within a Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC). He has operational experience as the Chief of Combat Rescue in Kabul, Afghanistan, with the International Security Assistance Force. He commanded JRCC Victoria from July 2009 to July 2012. His earlier experience was in tactical airlift in the CC-130 Hercules, and Electronic Warfare Officer experience in the CT-133 Silver Star.

Introduction

On 14 February 1982, a brutal winter storm bore down on a region of the North Atlantic Ocean near Newfoundland known as the Hibernia Oilfields. The oil rig *Ocean Ranger* was one of several platforms in the area, battered by 160 kph winds and waves nearly four stories tall.¹ By 1:10 am on the 15th, and for reasons beyond the scope of this argument, the *Ocean Ranger* was listing badly and the crew started sending out Mayday calls. A mere 20 minutes later, the radios went silent as the last crew members abandoned to life rafts. Despite a large search and rescue (SAR) response later that day, all 84 lives onboard were tragically lost to the cold and cruel sea.

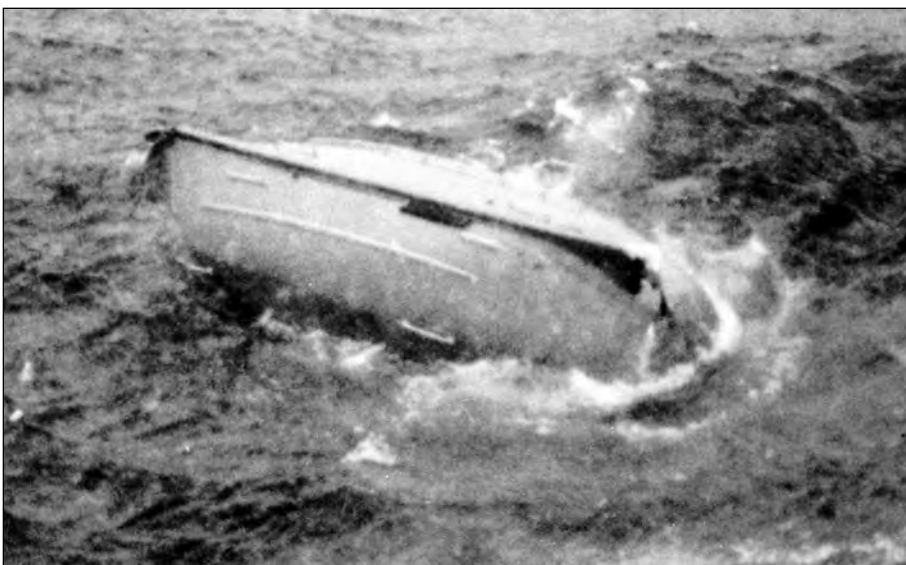
The disaster shocked the nation, and the government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau immediately responded with a royal commission that, among many recommendations, identified necessary changes to the SAR system in Canada. The most important of the changes to the SAR system was the 1986 National SAR Program (NSP).² The NSP established a national coordinating authority for SAR policy in Canada called the National SAR Secretariat (NSS), which aimed to ensure that Canada would be better prepared for future SAR incidents of the magnitude of the *Ocean Ranger*. The NSS was to assist the lead minister for SAR, the Minister of National Defence, with formulating future policy for aeronautical and maritime emergencies. The NSP and associated changes promised a robust framework for the development of effective federal SAR policy in Canada.³

Over the three decades since, however, the promise of effective policy was not delivered. The well-regarded operational capabilities of the Canadian Coast Guard and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) masked the NSP's lack of effectiveness. A brief analysis of the NSP will be presented that finds a SAR policy gap and shows recent efforts to fix the framework that may resolve the systemic weaknesses. However, even as the gap is closed, hidden problems fester in the current delivery of the operational SAR service by the RCAF's joint rescue coordination centres (JRCCs) and aircrew.



Associated Press/Image ID 8202161189

The *Ocean Ranger* semi-submersible drilling platform, 16 February 1982.



Associated Press/CP Images 04712650

An overturned lifeboat from the *Ocean Ranger* on high seas off the coast of Newfoundland, after the rig sank in a storm, killing 84.

Specific examples will highlight the types of operational concerns that were hidden in the policy gap until recently, and it will be clarified how policy can resolve each concern. Throughout, it will be argued that the NSP policy gap has allowed serious problems to develop specifically within the RCAF's operational delivery of SAR services, and solutions will be suggested to assist in the ongoing effort to rescue the Canadian SAR framework.

Finding the Policy Gap

The policy framework and the amount of resources assigned to the delivery of federal aeronautical and maritime SAR services in Canada have remained surprisingly static since the development of the NSP in 1986.⁴ Operationally, the number of SAR missions managed per year has not increased, and the assigned geographical area of Canadian coverage has not changed markedly in decades, so there has been no real impetus for close scrutiny of a system that has largely proved successful.⁵ Arguably, the few steps forward after the *Ocean Ranger* tragedy were hastily assembled, and the NSP process has failed to work effectively for recent governments.

The NSP's intended scope of the federal portion of the Canadian SAR system was to impose the pillars of *prevention* and *response* upon distress incidents of maritime vessels in Canada's oceans and Great Lakes, and upon aeronautical incidents anywhere within Canada's area of responsibility.⁶ The magnitude of the area is depicted in Figure 1, and it can be put into perspective by knowing that a SAR CC130 Hercules flight from Trenton, Ontario, to the Northern tip of Ellesmere island takes over eight hours of flight time before the Hercules can even commence search efforts.⁷ It can take a helicopter over a day to reach some of the farthest points North for rescue efforts, and SAR helicopters cannot reach all parts of Canada's oceanic areas. SAR response can take a very long time when someone is in distress, and policy determines how an incident is investigated and searched, which is why the effectiveness of the NSP is so fundamental to the SAR service provided for the Canadian public.

Michael Ferguson, Report of the Auditor General of Canada – Spring 2013, Chapter 7, Exhibit 7.3

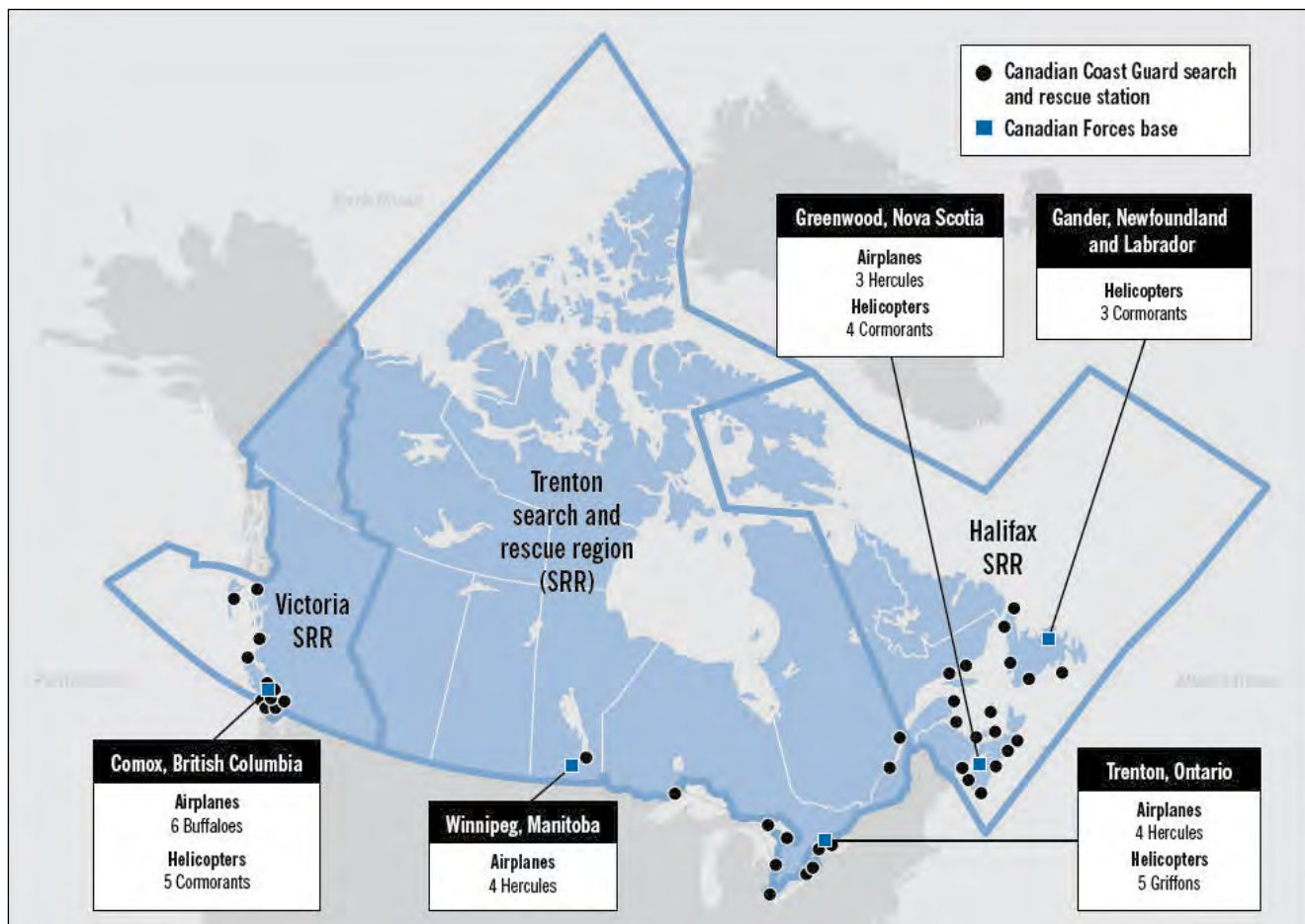


Figure 1: Locations of Canada's search and rescue stations and bases.⁸

The objective of the NSP was “to prevent loss of life and injury through search and rescue alerting, responding and aiding activities ...” and at the time it was believed that provincial and federal areas of SAR responsibility were generally well-defined.⁹ It is important to note that provinces and territories are still responsible for ground SAR and maritime rescue in provincial lakes, which have limited the amount of rescue activity required from RCAF and Canadian Coast Guard federal resources. However, the limits are not as separate as one might imagine, and provincial and territorial partners are largely left out in the cold for most deliberations of federal SAR policy.¹⁰ Even with the limits, there are still numerous Government of Canada departments that must remain aligned for federal SAR services. Leading this alignment, the Department of National Defence (DND) was responsible for the effective operations of the coordinated aeronautical and maritime SAR system in Canada.¹¹

In order to ensure effective alignment between federal departments, the NSP reconfirmed the lead Minister for SAR, the Minister of National Defence, as the “single spokesperson for the government on overall SAR matters.”¹² An Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue (ICSAR) and the NSS supports the lead minister. ICSAR is formed of senior personnel from the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada, Public Safety Canada, the Privy Council Office, and many others in the federal government. The role of ICSAR

is “to provide interdepartmental coordination and advice to the ministers in the areas of SAR policy, planning, resources, and effectiveness.” Complementing ICSAR, the NSS was created to play “a central managerial support role” in defining national SAR objectives and to advise the lead minister for SAR on policy, planning, resources and effectiveness. Together, ICSAR was to identify problems, the minister was to provide government direction for federal SAR policy changes, and the NSS was to write the policies and coordinate the procedures between the applicable departments to enable the solutions.

If one accepts that provincial and territorial partners are not required for developing federal SAR policy, the system described above should work well. In effect, it appears that all the right federal organizations have a say in SAR policy development; there is a clear process for advising the government and for receiving a clear answer from one individual in Cabinet, and the NSS is assigned to follow up with policy and coordination. The NSP should have been successful.

However, there were signs pointing to a lack of effective coordination, which will be described momentarily. It is likely that the root of the coordination problems lies in the failure of the NSS to develop “an overall federal policy, planning framework, clear statement of expectations for federal SAR services, or ability to measure overall federal SAR effectiveness.”¹³ In the absence of a

formal policy provided by the NSS, CAF and the Canadian Coast Guard refined their existing *National SAR Manual* to capture the international direction governing SAR requirements in Canada and to present common procedures, techniques, and terminology for maritime and aeronautical SAR operations.¹⁴ The manual did not provide policy principles, common priorities, service requirements, or standards because NSS was responsible for a national performance measurement framework that was never delivered, and therein lies the beginning of the gap.¹⁵

To be fair, the NSS was not in an ideal position to create the necessary policy. The NSS was an entity within DND, and it reported directly to the Minister of National Defence.¹⁶ It made efforts to build relationships with other federal organizations and non-federal agencies, but DND narrowed its focus to delivering aeronautical SAR services and to assisting the Canadian Coast Guard in maritime SAR cases rather than the previous assumption of DND responsibility for all federal operational SAR matters.¹⁷ The NSP had envisaged a SAR policy framework existing within the leadership of DND, but that framework no longer appeared to be necessary, wanted, or functional.

An obvious example of the gap was the lack of updates to the policy contained in the *National SAR Manual*. It was last updated in 2000, and it was replaced in 2014 with the remarkably similar *Canadian Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual (CAM SAR)*.¹⁸ In the new CAM SAR, investigative procedures for JRCCs remained nearly identical, and only minor changes were made to search policies for RCAF aircraft. At the risk of oversimplification, it took 14 years to change the manual's format and to make minor changes to Canada's only SAR policy document. There was negligible policy progress during this time.

The lead minister for SAR and the ICSAR meetings are two other areas where reality was not living up to the promise of the NSP. Even though it is not clear when the lead minister for SAR function in government ceased, it has not been a function used by government for some time, and departments have been left to coordinate policy with other organizations on their own.¹⁹ In fact, a 1999 NSS report stated that there was no evidence of issues or advice ever passed from ICSAR to the lead minister for SAR.²⁰ Perhaps the lack of ministerial direction explains why ICSAR only met once in the three years before 2015, as direction from Cabinet was no longer provided by one minister and the NSS was not able to provide the necessary policy follow-through required as a result of any agreement reached by ICSAR and federal department's leadership.²¹ What is clear is that the NSP was coming undone and a new process was required to prevent a policy gap big enough for another disaster.

Fixing the Framework

Change came in the form of the spring 2013 Report of the Auditor General of Canada. This scathing report outlined detailed coordination problems among the federal organizations responsible for SAR, and the criticisms were subsequently confirmed by a DND report on its role in national SAR.²² By the summer of 2015, the Canadian government had acted upon the criticism and the NSS, along with the NSP, was transferred to Public Safety Canada.²³

Public Safety Canada may prove to be an ideal department for the overall coordination of SAR policy in Canada because it has expertise in coordinating among various government organizations as well as a history of coordination between federal, provincial, and territorial partners.²⁴ Arguably, that coordination was sadly lacking in recent years and could well have been responsible for the gradual decline of ICSAR's effectiveness prior to 2015. Since the transfer, however, ICSAR has met at least six times to identify problems, to resolve them, and to develop a new SAR framework.²⁵

ICSAR now reports to Public Safety Canada.²⁶ Although there is no formal direction appointing a new lead minister for SAR, that role now belongs—for all intents and purposes—to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.²⁷ There is, once again, a 'belly button' in Cabinet, so to speak, for all matters relating to the overall delivery of federal SAR

services. Another promising sign is the acknowledgement that the existing pillars of *prevention* and *response* overlooked the importance of *preparedness*, which had placed a disproportionate SAR policy emphasis on the operational response from CAF and the Canadian Coast Guard.²⁸ The coordinated preparation for the future needs of SAR is the missing piece that may connect the government's policy on federal SAR activities with the operational delivery of the SAR service, including provincial and territorial authorities. The value of preparation will be highlighted in the upcoming discussion on problems remaining in the policy gap.

It should now be clear that the NSP's initial focus on the Minister of National Defence leading federal SAR activities was an overly narrow approach that failed to work for the Canadian government at the highest levels. It took the Auditor General to initiate change, but the work completed by Public Safety Canada so far is very promising. A significant reason for optimism is that modernizing the SAR framework is not resulting from a major disaster where solutions were required quickly; it is resulting from internal analysis and current operational effectiveness to provide a well-researched and well-thought-out new framework. As improvements are not being made under public duress, a new policy framework may prove more durable over the years to come.

“Although there is no formal direction appointing a new lead minister for SAR, that role now belongs – for all intents and purposes – to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.”

DND Photo IS03-2016-0035-004 by Master Corporal Pat Blanchard



A Search and Rescue technician jumps from a CH-149 *Cormorant* helicopter into a lake during the National Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX 2016) in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 21 September 2016.

Problems Hidden in the Policy Gap

Improvements are well underway for SAR policy. However, serious problems developed in the policy gap, and they need to be outlined, reviewed, and repaired before the new framework is fully implemented. Specifically, discussion will clarify that policy has not kept up with telecommunications and search improvements needed for the Canadian public's use of cellular phones and the global positioning system (GPS). The JRCC's investigative searches need to have the ability to locate distressed callers, whether they are phoning from landlines or mobile cellular phones. Additionally, the prolific use of GPS in the maritime and aeronautical environments, and other related technological advances, require significant upgrades to search policies. Improvements in these two areas will close the remaining operational gap and enable the federal SAR partners to maintain success in any new national SAR framework.

One of the most significant problems in the policy gap is the inability of JRCCs to locate people in distress using telecommunications. This inability is important because the three JRCCs in Canada prosecuted 9,172 SAR incidents in 2014, and they require the distress locations quickly.²⁹ Currently, coordinators rely on information obtained from the caller rather than an automatic provision of caller location. The only policy on telecommunications requirements in JRCCs, however, is that all conversations

on operational communications lines shall be recorded, kept, numbered, and dated.³⁰ It has been left to JRCCs to determine if more robust communications requirements are needed and to implement any new requirements without supporting policy.

One of the subtleties of the JRCC's placement on military bases is that the base telephone exchange system does not always synchronize phone number information between military and civilian phone exchanges. Practically, this has serious implications.

Many numbers would not register on call display from outside the military exchange, and even numbers that did, could not be accessed if the call terminated prior to the Coordinator writing down the number. As an example; a boater in the water screaming for help into a cell phone would not receive assistance if location [and] the phone number were not passed [to the coordinator] before the call terminated.³¹

In 2011, JRCC Victoria initiated a telecommunications upgrade from the military phone exchange to a civilian system, which resulted in the ability to automatically acquire the phone number of every caller.³² The following year, JRCC Halifax put in place a more refined version of the new system.³³ However, and for reasons unknown, JRCC Trenton has not yet followed the example of the other JRCCs.³⁴ The practical reality of insufficient policy is that Canadians receive different levels of SAR investigative service across the country.

An interim solution is to upgrade JRCC Trenton to the new Victoria and Halifax JRCC standard, but more work on telecommunications is required. For example, the new CAMSAR does not address a JRCC need to locate cell phones of distressed callers, even though there are now 30,045,817 mobile phone subscribers in a population of 36,155,487 in Canada, meaning 83 percent of all Canadians have a cell phone in their pockets that emergency management agencies can use to locate individuals in distress.³⁵ In fact, a 2009 policy developed by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission mandated that all Canadian wireless service providers had to implement a method to determine the location of every individual calling 911 from a cell phone, and to ensure that the 911 centre was given a location within 30 seconds.³⁶ Therefore, there are existing ways in which JRCCs can acquire the location of distressed people calling emergency-service phone numbers.³⁷

However, because JRCCs do not receive most calls through 911 centres, it is quite complicated for a JRCC to acquire a cell phone location.³⁸ While it is likely that all three JRCCs have a procedure to acquire mobile caller information from Canadian cellular service providers, only JRCC Victoria currently has a procedure outlined in their standard operating procedures (SOP).³⁹ Arguably, the complicated nature of obtaining location information means that the procedure is not used very often or, put another

way, as often as would be desired by coordination personnel.⁴⁰ There is not enough data available to determine how many times the caller location would assist SAR investigations, but if JRCCs could acquire caller locations quickly and more often, then SAR investigations would be considerably streamlined to provide a better service.

“JRCC integration into 911 telecommunications would undoubtedly result in a very robust improvement of federal SAR investigations across the country.”

Now that Public Safety Canada is responsible for SAR policy development, consideration should be given to developing a policy that incorporates JRCCs into the next-generation 911 service planned to integrate provincial, territorial, and municipal governments.⁴¹ This incorporation may not be as challenging to implement as may appear; fire halls on military bases are already connected to the 911 service, and it is quite possible that the same service can be extended to the JRCCs.⁴² As 98 percent of Canadians have access to 911, the time may finally be right to integrate federal, provincial, and territorial emergency management frameworks with a coordinated policy.⁴³ JRCC integration into 911 telecommunications would undoubtedly result in a very robust improvement of federal SAR investigations across the country.

The other area where policy has not kept up to technological advances is in search policies for RCAF aircraft, and a recent announcement by the Trudeau Government has made it critical to review those policies now. The Canadian government will purchase



DND photo CX2013-0088-40 by Private Dan Moore

Royal Canadian Navy Search and Rescue Launch 64 cruises past HMCS *Edmonton* during a search and rescue exercise held off the coast of Prince Rupert, BC, 30 April 2013.

16 C295W aircraft from Airbus Defence and Space to replace the current fixed-wing SAR capability provided by the CC130 *Hercules* and the CC115 *Buffalo*.⁴⁴ The C295W is far superior to the *Buffalo* and it is a better aircraft than the *Hercules* in many respects, but it transits slower than the *Hercules* by 45 knots, which means that search efficiency is needed for the new SAR aircraft to arrive at distress locations as quickly as the *Hercules*.⁴⁵

An example of a SAR aircraft search policy that needs updating is the Canadian Search Area Definition for missing aircraft.⁴⁶ Since the definition became policy in the late 1980s, the use of GPS has become widespread, and an operations research scientist conducted a study in 2010 to determine if there was a discernible change in the pattern of crash data obtained over the 2003 to 2010 period.⁴⁷ In order to ease the passage of any potential change in policy, it was decided to use the exact same methodology as the study that created the Canadian Search Area Definition. The conclusion was definitive; “more crashes fall within Area One alone, than were previously covered by Area One and Two combined.” Without going into detail about each search area, the new data made it clear that the overall search area assigned to RCAF aircraft could easily be reduced while achieving a higher rate of confidence that the search object would be within the new assigned area. Despite the clear data and same methodology, the search area policy has not changed.

The importance of updating search policy is to ensure that RCAF aircraft arriving at an incident location are assigned the smallest search area required. By searching a smaller area with the same or higher probability that the search object is in the area, lives may be saved, and that is precisely why the research suggestion should inform operations. In fact, searching a smaller area for ongoing missions falls under the authority of the SAR region commander in charge of a JRCC, and in at least one SAR mission, a smaller search area was assigned because the area would have otherwise taken well over a week in life-threatening mountain weather.⁴⁸ Searching a smaller area in that mission meant a greater possibility that survivors might have been found and it reduced risk to the search crews by limiting their flying time in difficult conditions. Again, the lack of updated SAR policy means that differing standards are emerging across the country.

One last example of search-policy problems is the long-standing RCAF focus on visual search techniques on aircraft. Currently, the aircrew on board a SAR aircraft conducting a search will set up spotter rotations so that there is always someone visually searching both sides of the aircraft from large windows made for that purpose.⁴⁹ If an item of interest is spotted, the aircraft will circle until the spotter can confirm whether or not the item of interest is the search object. This tried-and-true method works very well over land, but it does not always work sufficiently over water, as can be imagined in the following case.

On 2 August 2010, four men onboard the vessel *Qualicum Rivers 9* failed to return from a charter-fishing trip on the west coast of Vancouver Island. In this case, the vessel’s failure to return was reported late in the day, and fog and cloud cover closed in,

thus hampering visual search efforts throughout the six days of searching. The SAR CC115 *Buffalo* resorted to finding contacts on its weather radar, and the CH149 *Cormorant* could only view the area right underneath the aircraft.⁵⁰ The CP140 *Aurora* aircraft was required to use its advanced sensors to locate objects in the water and to determine if any of the objects located might have been part of the missing vessel.

As the search went on, it became clear that electronic searching from aircraft located many items, but it was not always possible to determine if these items were the search object.⁵¹ To make matters worse, the winds and currents expanded the search area so quickly over the first five days that searches had to be conducted in American waters hundreds of miles from the vessel’s last known position. As an insufficient number of search vessels were available to check out each object located by aircraft, or the vessels were not close enough to proceed to the location in a timely manner, some of the unidentified objects were left unresolved. Electronic searches like the one described above are relatively rare, but coordination between RCAF aircraft and vessels searching in bad weather needs policy improvement.

To conclude our sad story of the missing vessel, it was located on the fifth day, and the sixth day was devoted to searching shorelines in the area for possible survivors. Tragically, the vessel was found overturned with men’s pants tied around the leg of the outboard motor as a makeshift flag to help spotters. The sad reality was that the cold water temperatures reduced the survival time of the four men to no more than 13 hours, meaning that the men had already succumbed by the first full day of search efforts.⁵² They were not found.

“The technology to conduct searches for cell phones is not new; it is in current use by law enforcement authorities in the United States.”

Better use of electronic searching would not have changed the outcome of this particular case, but better use of electronic searching to supplement visual searches may save lives in the future. The new C295W will include electro-optic and infrared sensors, and the improved poor-weather search ability means that electronic searches are going to be conducted by SAR aircraft more often.⁵³ Another interesting line of investigation from the tragedy outlined above was that all four men had carried cellular phones, and efforts were made to determine if a location was available from the cellular service provider.⁵⁴ Even though the service providers had been unable to assist in this case, if phones in future cases remain functional after a distress incident, the missing object and people might be found if search aircraft have a means to locate the cell phone. Consideration needs to be given to electronic-search policies that can enable search aircraft to locate cellular phones carried by missing people.

Surprisingly, there has been very little research conducted on the use of electronic searching for cell phones during SAR missions.⁵⁵ As discussed earlier, cell phones are now carried by the majority of people in Canada, and search policy and RCAF aircraft search equipment should make use of the signals emitted by cellular phones. The technology to conduct searches for cell phones is not new; it is in current use by law enforcement authorities in the United States.⁵⁶ Indeed, the technique is fairly simple. A device in a search aircraft emits a cell phone tower

signal that activates a dormant cell phone and causes it to contact the search device, after which time the device can determine the cell phone's location.⁵⁷ New policy to incorporate cellular phone searches could prove highly beneficial for the C295W aircraft and would help take the search out of search and rescue.

In summary, there are telecommunications problems in the JRCCs and there are better ways to do business for RCAF SAR aircraft. Resolving these problems, which do not appear to be difficult, would eliminate the policy gap brought on by an ineffective NSP. As the RCAF begins to bring on a new SAR aircraft that will take a little longer to reach a search area, now is a good time to close the policy gap.

Conclusion

The NSP and the NSS were long overdue when the Canadian SAR framework was formalized in 1986. Unfortunately, the duress created by the *Ocean Ranger* disaster meant that the government enabled the NSP and NSS without first determining if the needs of the provinces and territories fit within the federal SAR construct. As the operational SAR lines became blurred between federal and other levels of policy, the NSS lost effectiveness, the role of minister for SAR dissolved, and ICSAR stopped meeting regularly. Aided by DND limiting its involvement to aeronautical SAR responsibilities, the NSP drifted into irrelevance and policy became badly outdated.

Fortunately, the recent transfer of SAR to Public Safety Canada is likely to provide a long-term solution for the SAR

policy framework in Canada. The now-regular ICSAR meetings are an important first step in closing the policy gap and developing a framework that should ensure long-term effectiveness of the Canadian SAR service. However, there are still problems evident in JRCC telecommunications and in specific search techniques that keep the policy gap wide enough for another disaster.

The *good* news is that the solutions are largely straightforward. Public Safety Canada needs to look at the possibility of a next-generation 911 policy that can incorporate the JRCCs' telecommunications needs. ICSAR needs to look at search policies for aircraft to ensure that the search area definitions are supported by recent research. Finally, the RCAF needs to conceptualize the requirement for electronic cell phone searching from RCAF SAR aircraft to inform new policy solutions. These efforts are owed to the Canadian public.

In closing, effective policy is crucial to the operational SAR service. However, ineffective and outdated policy has left the JRCCs with inadequate tools for the technological characteristics of Canadians in distress. It cannot be said that people have died because of the problems, but the frightening reality is that it is impossible to know if or how many people have lost their lives because of inadequate telecommunications and search policies. Despite the promise of a new national framework, Canadian SAR policy is still in need of rescue.

CMJ



A Search and Rescue technician is raised from the water to a CH-146 Griffon helicopter during a simulated evacuation off the coast of Miami, Florida, during Exercise *Southern Breeze*, 14 February 2017.

DND photo BN07-2017-0500-006 by Corporal Gary Calvé

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The Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Sir Alan Brooke, at his desk at the War Office, 1942.

British Strategic Culture and General Sir Alan Brooke during the Second World War

by Greg Smith

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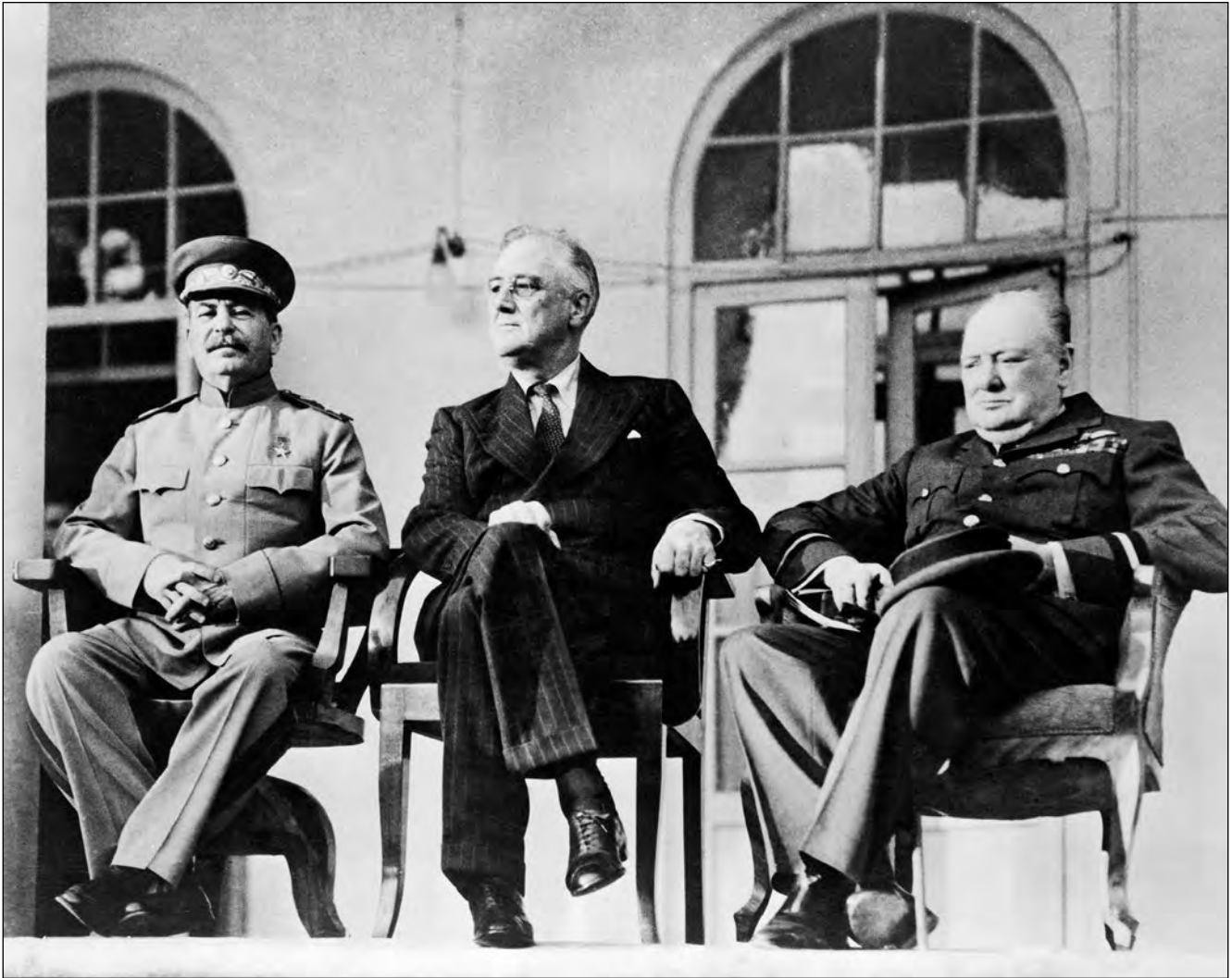
Introduction

During the early days of the Second World War, Britain faced the dire threat of invasion from Nazi Germany and the conquest of its global empire. However, such an existential danger to Britain and its colonies was not new in the country's history. Despite its relatively small geographic size, the island-nation had historically faced and overcame frequent threats from invading great European powers. Due to centuries of surviving existential threats in a dangerous geo-political neighbourhood, along with defending its colonies, Britain developed a pragmatic and experienced strategic culture

that would guide its Second World War actions against the Axis powers.

Strategic culture is an important aspect of national security, and it is critical to understanding how nations view, consider, and react to national security threats. Embedded in the national psyche, this broad strategic concept guides the considerations and decisions of national security professionals and senior military officers. This was particularly true of General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, one of Britain's foremost military leaders during the Second World War. His decisions during this epic conflict, although shaped by his personal experience and education, were a product of Britain's strategic culture, and those decisions impacted enormously upon British and Allied actions.

This article will examine the critical role of Britain's strategic culture upon the Allied Second World War. Following a short examination of this concept, Britain's historic strategic culture



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The Allies' eventual "Big Three," Joseph Stalin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill, in 1943.

will be reviewed, including the broad traditions of the "maritime school" and the "continental school." This analysis will allow the reader to subsequently view General Brooke's actions during the war as a product of his country's strategic traditions. Although focused upon Britain's national strategic culture, ultimately, this examination allows Canadian national security professionals to reflect upon Canada's *own* strategic traditions.

Strategic Culture

The term strategic culture and its study originated in the 1970s with American political scientist Jack Snyder of the RAND Corporation attempting to understand and explain Soviet behaviour in comparison with a rational choice theory.¹ Researching the differences between Soviet and American security beliefs, practices, and resultant nuclear strategy, Snyder's efforts intersected with military historians' earlier research with respect to national ways of warfare.² Strategic culture studies were born from this complimentary analysis.³

A state's strategic culture manifests from numerous diverse national characteristics. Although multiple authors describe these components, noted British-American strategic thinker Professor

Colin S. Gray illuminates the contributors to strategic culture most logically by organizing them into six categories: nationality; geography; service, branch, weapons, and functions; simplicity-complexity; generation; and grand strategy.⁴ First, nationality refers to the effect of the distinctive strategic cultural lens created by national historical experience. Second, not dissimilar to a country's heritage, the physical geography of a state—its size, shape, and natural resources—has an impact upon a security community's perception.⁵

Third, and more *tactically*, within a state's armed forces, there are distinct cultures based upon service, branch, weapons, and functions, since professional orientation affects cultural perspective.⁶ Further, strategic cultures may be categorized, based upon a group's attitude towards simplicity and complexity, whereby some groups embrace holistic analysis, and others more discrete, sequential evaluation.⁷ Fifth, strategic culture evolves as each generation interprets their context, based upon their historical experience. Thus, to Gray: "... a dominant strategic culture will be reintegrated by each generation in the light of its own distinct experience."⁸ Finally, a state's grand strategic orientation impacts its culture as security communities become habituated to certain policy instruments.⁹

Based upon such broad and diverse factors contributing to strategic culture, the potential for highly differentiated security world views or *Weltanschauung* is understandable.¹⁰ Indeed, as suggested by Victoria University's Edward Lock, a community or state "naturally possesses a unique strategic culture."¹¹ However, before defining this concept, a closer examination of the term culture itself is necessary. MIT's Edgar Schein, in his seminal work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, defines culture,

... as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to consider valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.¹²

Therefore, culture can simplistically be understood to refer to the learned norms of a group that are ingrained in thought, emotion, practice, certain collective identities, and world perception. Thus, by extension, strategic culture links culture and a state's security perceptions. Gray therefore suggests that strategic culture or cultures "... comprise the persisting socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that has had a unique historical experience."¹³ Specifically, strategic culture can be broadly understood to refer to a security community's common strategic thoughts, understandings, perceptions, beliefs, language, and behavioural defaults, based upon geographic, historic, national, and other experiences. Although somewhat abstract, this concept critically shapes a state's *attitude towards* and *lens with which it views* its national security. For this reason, Professor Theo Farrell of King's College London notes, "...strategic culture is found in both the thoughts and actions of policy-makers and military officers ...," and its understanding grants an important comprehension of strategic thinking.¹⁴ This concept forms a framework for the examination of Britain's strategic culture, its impact upon the conduct of the Second World War, and ultimately, it enables reflection upon Canada's contemporary security *Weltanschauung*.

British National Strategic Culture

Britain's Second World War strategic culture was a slave to its national experience and characteristics. As a relatively small island nation proximate to larger continental powers, a constitutional monarchy, and a vast maritime-focused trading empire, Britain's geography, history, political experience, and other national factors shaped its strategic culture. History Professor William S. Maltby of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, summarizes its resultant strategic traditions, and concludes:

Tension between England's naval and imperial commitments and its periodic need to intervene with land forces on the European continent has characterized the making of strategy from the Elizabethan era to the present. This tension arises naturally from the three

primary strategic objectives that the makers of English strategy pursued at the beginning of the early modern period. The most immediate was to prevent invasion by maintaining naval control of the Channel. The second was to protect England's overseas trade and to encourage the development of colonies, while the third, which sometimes took precedence over the second, was to prevent any European power from achieving hegemony on the continent.¹⁵

These conflicting goals resulted in a bifurcated strategic culture that balanced what Churchill scholar Tuvia Ben-Moshe describes as the "maritime school," which sought naval supremacy to seclude Britain from European calamity, and the "continental school," which strove to fight alongside its allies in Europe and therefore balance the strongest powers on the continent.¹⁶ The examination of these two approaches reveals important aspects of Britain's strategic culture.

The British "maritime school" aimed to command the sea. Through dominance of the maritime commons, London could protect its own territory, maintain access to foreign commerce and its colonies, and retain the initiative over its rivals.¹⁷ Oxford's Professor Norman Gibbs expressed this predominant strategic view:

... British strategy in modern times ... has been to command the sea. The successful establishment of that command rested upon a combination of two main factors: the maintenance of a powerful navy, often conforming to a 'two-power standard'; and the deployment of that navy in positions to control the sea-ways in and out of Europe Thus deployed, the Royal Navy could protect Britain herself from invasion, guard British overseas trade, and also exercise a controlling hand over the use of the seas by her enemies.¹⁸

Further, this maritime view emphasized the Royal Navy's role in economic warfare.

The distinguished British military historian Sir Basil Liddell Hart, in particular, recognizes the interconnectedness of the British maritime tradition and the economic aspect of conflict:

Our historic practice ... was based on economic pressure exercised through sea power. This naval body had two arms; one financial, which embraced the subsidizing and military provisioning of allies; the other military, which embraced sea-borne expeditions against the enemy's vulnerable extremities.¹⁹

This nuanced, bi-faceted naval-economic strategic view saw maritime power able to maintain sea lines of communication, and thereby, resupply and maintain Britain's allies, and further financially target and damage its opponents' merchant fleet, its resource-providing colonies, and thus, its economy.²⁰ This "maritime school," heavily linked to the existential survival of Britain and its global empire, integrates military and economic strategies, and is deeply ingrained in the British security psyche.

"Based upon such broad and diverse factors contributing to strategic culture, the potential for highly differentiated security world views or *Weltanschauung* is understandable."



British armies launched massive ground attacks on the Somme in 1916, with massive casualties sustained.

However, this emphasis upon maritime power caused an unbalancing effect upon the Britain's strategic culture – an anti-Army bias. A young Winston Churchill reflects this prejudice: "Only unsurpassed naval strength could safeguard the world trade vital to Britain's survival. There was no need for a large regular army to defend the British Isles or to make war on continental or European powers."²¹ Despite violating this tenet and suffering horrific casualties on the Western Front during the First World War, this naval strategic tradition remained unchanged, as suggested by Gray: "Maritime Britain functioned as a major continental power from 1916 until 1918, but that brief continental performance did not cancel or deny the contrary character of Britain's dominant strategic culture."²² Britain's pre-Second World War strategic culture therefore portrayed an unnaturally dominant pro-Navy, anti-Army belief.²³

With the maritime element dominating Britain's strategic culture, the land component took a secondary role. Nevertheless, the British Army possessed several traditional tasks which formed its own military strategic culture.²⁴ First, despite London's desire to avoid "...entanglement in European quarrels," the British Army was prepared to balance dominant land powers on the continent.²⁵ In pursuit of so-called "balancing," Britain would combine militarily with a continental ally through diplomatic manoeuvring. A more mature Churchill explains this British tradition:

"However, this emphasis upon maritime power caused an unbalanced effect upon Britain's strategic culture – an anti-Army bias."

For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, the most aggressive the most dominating Power on the Continent joined with the less strong Powers, made a combination among them, and thus defeated and frustrated the Continental military tyrant ...²⁶

Equally, due to its operational proximity, London particularly sought to maintain control of the English Channel ports and the Low Countries.²⁷

The second aspect of balancing represents a further and important facet of British strategic culture. Lacking sufficient land forces, London needed to practice careful statecraft to create alliances and to counteract the dominant European power.²⁸ Britain's ultimate strategic end—national survival—required a national interest-focused, cold-blooded calculation of balance of power.²⁹ This mature, non-altruistic strategic culture is displayed in an inter-war cabinet discussion with respect to Britain's obligation to guarantee the German-Belgian and German-French borders. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), Sir George Milne, expressed, "For us ... it is only incidentally a question of French security; essentially it is a matter of British security The true strategic position of Great Britain is on the Rhine."³⁰ Critical to national survival, alliances management formed an important aspect of Britain's strategic culture.



Lieutenant General Miles Dempsey, General Sir Alan Brooke, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, General Bernard Law Montgomery, and General Jan Smuts of South Africa outside the headquarters of 21st Army Group somewhere in southern England, 15 July 1943.

This grand strategic outlook extended to Britain's empire as it searched for allies to balance the rising power of Germany. As Britain's empire increasingly waned in the early 20th Century, London attempted to balance its national security with its colonial commitments. Demonstrating a sober statecraft based upon national interest, Britain strategically withdrew its imperial commitments and prepared for the coming storm of the First World War by shaping a future ally:

... Britain had a long history of successfully appeasing challengers as a cost-effective strategy to balance multiple security commitments in Europe and the empire... In 1901, the British government effectively ceded its hegemonic role in North America to the rising United States by signing the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, granting the United States the sole right to build an isthmian canal and negotiating the Venezuelan and Canadian border agreements. Many scholars point to Britain's success in the two decades prior to the First World War in retrenching from its empire and concentrating its global resources in its home waters against the primary German threat.³¹

This case exemplifies the maturity of Britain's imperial strategic culture. Committed to forming a grand alliance capable of balancing the rising continental power of Germany, London carefully disengaged from its declining empire. This aspect of

continental commitment required the harmonizing of ends and means, and a sober and nuanced national strategic culture.³²

The second strategic task of the British Army was to police its colonies, and if necessary, to participate in 'small wars.'³³ The need for soldiers to conduct what would contemporaneously be entitled 'asymmetric warfare' created a further tension in Britain's strategic culture:

Whilst the majority of other armies are trained essentially for war, the British Army is primarily a force for policing the Empire. And the Briton abroad, more responsive to traditional instinct than to reason, still finds more comfort in the visible presence of khaki-clad guards scattered around the country than in the potential appearance of armour-clad machines ...³⁴

Dr. Frank Ledwidge of the Royal Air Force College agrees with this strategic tradition dichotomy in stating:

Equally, there were constant disagreements within the army as to what exactly it was for: Was it a colonial army-intended to fight 'limited war'-what might now be termed 'expeditionary warfare'? Or was the army a force for major warfare against 'conventional' enemies who threatened the home islands?³⁵

With a vast empire to maintain, colonial policing remained a *significant* although *neglected* and *under-resourced* task for the British Army.³⁶ As the land forces conducted ‘small wars’ for centuries throughout the British Empire, it formed an important aspect of Britain’s strategic culture.³⁷

Closely tied to the colonial and trade aspect of its maritime traditions, and the balancing aspect of its continental tradition, Britain’s strategic culture embraced financial strength. Indeed, Norman Gibbs emphasizes the importance of Britain’s economy to its overall military power in stating “The country’s fourth arm of defence was its financial stability which depended upon full industrial recovery and the export trade.”³⁸ Stated more simply by Theo Farrell, who equally returns to the traditional importance of its maritime strength, “The United Kingdom’s empire rested on its financial muscle and ‘global-girdling navy.’”³⁹ Although the country’s financial power and stability were critical for its overall strategic strength, London equally understood its importance for potentially financing its allies and thereby balancing continental threats.⁴⁰

The use of statecraft and integration of the aforementioned strategic tools required careful coordination. This was because, as the noted British military historian Sir Michael Howard suggests, “Command of the seas and the maintenance of a European balance were in fact, not alternative policies ... but interdependent ...” Britain formed a tradition of strategic organizational coordination.⁴¹ This culture of strategic integration, which balanced shifting alliances, managed a vast empire, and coordinated maritime and continental commitments, is exemplified by Britain’s pre-First World War strategic, joint, and inter-agency coordination body.⁴² The Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) brought together military, financial, economic, diplomatic, and governmental perspectives to achieve a coherent and coordinated defence policy.⁴³ In examining this aspect of British strategic culture, Salford University’s Professor Aleric Searle recognizes in the inter-war period: “... elements of national strategic culture and service culture combined to generate a new ‘second tier,’ that of joint, inter-service military culture, for the first time involving army, navy, and air force.”⁴⁴

With a pro-maritime bias, Britain’s strategic culture prior to the Second World War formed a distinctively anti-continental commitment bias. Although capable of militarily balancing dominant powers in Europe with its own land forces, it preferred to form strong coalitions and conduct periphery operations to defeat its enemies while protecting its lines of communication and empire



Adolf Hitler and Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt on the Eastern Front, 1 July 1941.

with naval forces. Finally, having balanced continental powers and conducted joint operations for centuries, Britain faced Nazi Germany with a deep tradition of strategic coordination, and joint and inter-agency cooperation.

General Brooke in the Second World War

Alan Francis Brooke was born in July 1883 in the French Pyrenees to vacationing parents. Of noble Northern Ireland Protestant stock, and trained as an artillery officer, Brooke served with distinction in the First World War on the Western Front, including acting as the chief artillery staff officer to the Canadian Corps.⁴⁵ Having begun the Second World War as a corps commander, he participated in the British Expeditionary Force and competently evacuated his formation from Dunkirk. Following duty as Commander-in-Chief Home Defence, Prime Minister Churchill appointed Brooke as Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) on 18 November 1941,

and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CCSC) on 9 March 1942, acknowledging his considerable abilities and strategic mind.⁴⁶

The foremost illustration of the effect of Britain's strategic culture upon Brooke was the British resistance to an early direct attack upon continental Europe during the Second World War. With the United States declaring war on the Axis Powers in December 1941, the Americans quickly began planning with Great Britain to reconquer Europe. Following the Arcadia Conference, the British strongly resisted the United States' desire to commence major military operations via a direct assault on continental Europe, instead, advocating an indirect, peripheral attack against the Axis in the Mediterranean.⁴⁷

The British opposition to the American approach of assaulting Germany early and directly was multifaceted. First, having fought the Germans in the First World War and again in 1940, the British had great respect for the *Wehrmacht's* tactical ability, and they preferred to allow a naval blockade, strategic bombing, and the might of the Soviet military time to attrite the Axis forces.⁴⁸ Despite American enthusiasm, the British also possessed a mature understanding that U.S. forces would need to be blooded before they faced the battle-hardened Germans on the Northern European Plain.⁴⁹ Similarly, Professor Steven Lobell

of the University of Utah illustrates that the deliberate neglect of the British Army until 1938 soberly resigned London to the limitations of their own land forces.⁵⁰ Finally, with the military situation hanging in the balance in North Africa in the summer of 1942, London could not condone opening another theatre of war at the time.⁵¹

To Brooke, a direct attack on Germany was anathema to the British way of war. Indeed, he advocated a peripheral strategy, stating: "I am positive that our policy for the conduct of the war should be to direct both our military and political efforts towards the early conquest of North Africa. From there we shall be able to reopen the Mediterranean and to stage offensive operations against Italy."⁵² Brooke's sponsorship of this indirect North African campaign was symbolic of the traditional British strategic culture of peripheral attacks:

... Brooke was wedded to the traditional British maritime strategy of weakening Continental powers by blockade and peripheral operations, carried out in areas where the enemy found it most difficult to deploy and support large armies. While he accepted the probable need to cross the Channel in strength one day, his personal experiences in 1940 convinced him that this would not be practicable until German resistance was on the point of collapse.⁵³



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Churchill arrives in North Africa, August 1942.



War Archive/Alamy Stock photo/DYPRCR

British Army operations in North Africa, 1942. (1)

Although, as suggested by Professor Keith Neilson of the Royal Military College of Canada, the United States possessed the influence to sway Allied strategy, Britain remained faithful to its strategic culture and the defeat of Nazi Germany through naval blockade and strategic bombardment.⁵⁴

Thus, as the Allied offensive unfolded, Nazi Germany reacted precisely as Brooke and the peripheral strategy sought to exploit. Looking to draw-away the *Wehrmacht* from other theatres, Brooke's concept of assaulting indirectly through the Mediterranean appeared quite successful:

Everywhere on the Continent, the effects were being felt of Hitler's furious reaction to the British strategy of re-opening the Mediterranean and striking across it in order to draw Germany's troops from France and Russia into Europe's mountainous southern perimeter. Since the invasion of Sicily in July, more than forty Axis divisions had had to be

withdrawn, or were in the process of being withdrawn from other fronts. Already, the number of German divisions in Italy had risen from six to sixteen, and in the Balkans, from twelve to eighteen ... and three-quarters of Germany's air-fighter force was by now concentrated in Western and Southern Europe...⁵⁵

Concurrently, with pressure being relieved on the Russians and the attrition of the German war machine taking place, the allied forces gained valuable operational fighting experience and learned to strategically function as a coalition.⁵⁶

The British military's sound joint, interagency planning and coordination, grounded in its strategic culture, enabled much of this early-coalition success. During the Arcadia Conference, as the Allies coordinated grand strategic objectives, the less experienced Americans quickly recognized the British military's rich joint culture.⁵⁷ To a lead American planner:



War Archive/Alamy Stock Photo/DYPRGS

British Army operations in North Africa, 1942. (2)



Russian artillery in action on the Eastern Front, 1943.



Slightly after the Arcadia Conference, Winston Churchill with President Franklin Roosevelt after the signing of the Atlantic Charter aboard HMS *Prince of Wales*, 14 August 1941.

“We were more or less babes in the wood on this planning and joint business with the British. They’d been doing it for years. They were experts at it, and we were just starting. They’d found a way to get along between the services.”⁵⁸ This aspect of British strategic culture undoubtedly abetted the American agreement to a peripheral strategy while the emerging superpower’s own joint abilities developed. Concurrently, Brooke enforced the British joint strategic tradition as the head of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee. Leading “...the most perfect machine for the higher organization of the war,”⁵⁹ Brooke initiated, explained, and defended British military policy:

After 1940, almost every major question affecting Britain’s war effort—not only the movements, supply and reinforcement of her fleets, armies and air forces, but the control of manpower, industry, shipping, agriculture and at times even of imperial and foreign policy—was, if it had any bearing on military operations, referred to the [Chiefs of Staff] Committee.⁶⁰

Although Brooke’s personal strength as *primus inter pares* [first among equals, Ed.] greatly enabled this grand strategic decision making body, undoubtedly, the inculcation of the joint spirit, based upon Britain’s strategic culture, was an important factor.⁶¹

“Although Brooke’s principal strength as *primus inter pares* [first among equals Ed.] greatly enabled this grand strategic decision making body, undoubtedly, the inculcation of the joint spirit, based upon Britain’s strategic culture, was an important factor.”

Conclusion

This article was born out of an interest to better understand British martial culture. The author, having been fortunate enough to work and interact with the British military, found it to possess a mature and scrupulous approach towards the utility of force, the diverse tools of the armed services, and their country’s national interests. This mindset, properly labeled military strategic culture, although instructive, was discovered to be derivative of Britain’s national strategic culture.

More broadly, due to its national characteristics and imperial experiences, Britain possessed a rich and mature understanding of grand strategy and statecraft. A



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One of the key later Allied war conferences, the Tehran Conference (The Big Three Conference), Tehran, Iran, 1943. Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin are clearly identifiable.

relatively small country proximate to historically powerful hostile states, and also the hub of a vast empire, Britain developed a very pragmatic and sober view of national security, strategic survival, and imperial power. This strategic tradition, which is as complex and nuanced as Britain's historic security situation, includes the use of economic warfare, and a peripheral, indirect approach to warfare that allowed Britain to survive, thrive, and indeed, to establish one of the world's greatest empires maintain it for several centuries. Meanwhile, this strategic culture saw military responses as the ken, primarily, of maritime forces, delegating the British Army with the residual task of so-called small wars, and potentially, a continental commitment.

More philosophically, such challenges to national existence and the maintenance of a global empire enabled the development of a very judicious strategic culture. Foremost, this mature strategic tradition could be viewed 'grand strategically.' Here, a sober analysis of strategic ends and means enabled a gradual withdrawal from empire that consolidated imperial resources for the approaching world conflicts, and equally, positioned the rising American superpower as a close ally. At a lower level, Britain's abstemious strategic tradition enabled the integrated interaction of the multiple ministries and tools of state to carefully achieve national interests. To Professor Christopher Coker of the London School of Economics, this scrupulous national security culture reflects a deep strategic tradition: "Strategic cultures tend to think strategically: that is their purpose, or should be. In other words, nations have a pretty clear idea of their national interests and how best to advance them."⁶²

General Brooke, as a commander at the highest levels of Britain's war effort, was immersed in this strategic tradition. Although equally shaped by his military experiences, Brooke viewed the British approach to the Axis threat through the lens of its strategic culture. Rather than perceiving the road to Berlin as the most direct route from London, he advocated Britain's traditional imperial peripheral strategy, and thus, an attritional campaign through the Mediterranean while a naval blockade, strategic bombing, and the Russian juggernaut wore down the German war machine. Equally, he understood the importance of mobilizing and shaping allies to balance Britain's own inadequate forces. Finally, Brooke, as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, reflected the well-practiced British strategic tradition of close integration of all arms of government and the military. [Editor's Note: General Sir Alan Brooke, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke, KG, GCB, OM, GCVO, DSO & Bar, was promoted to Field Marshal in 1944.]

Reflecting upon the strategic culture of one of our mother countries provides an important lens with which to examine our own. Canada, possessing very different geographic characteristics and historical experiences, has therefore developed dissimilar strategic traditions. Nevertheless, the shrewd British understanding of *national interests* and the alignment of *strategic means* is a pragmatic principle that should be embraced by Canadian decision makers and military leaders. Similarly, readers, students, and crafters of Canada's strategic culture would do well to ingrain the traditions of joint, interagency coordination, including a sober appreciation of the importance of economic strength for national security.

CMJ



Granger Historical Picture Archives/Alamy Stock Photo/FFXMD

Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, and Supreme Allied commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower at an unidentified location, 14 November 1944.



Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo/EJG3YK

Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, and US Lieutenant General William Simpson cross the Rhine River on a Bailey bridge, 1945.

NOTES

- Rational Choice Theory states broadly that people, groups or states behave so as to maximize their benefit and minimize their cost. See Michael I. Ogu, "Rational Choice Theory: Assumptions, Strengths, and Greatest Weaknesses in Application Outside the Western Milieu Context," in *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Nigerian Chapter)*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (2013), p. 90, at http://www.academia.edu/3197007/RATIONAL_CHOICE_THEORY_ASSUMPTIONS_STRENGTHS_AND_GREATEST_WEAKNESSES_IN_APPLICATION_OUTSIDE_THE_WESTERN_MILIEU_CONTEXT.
- Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (London: Hamilton Press, 1986), pp. 33-34.
- Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 1.
- Gray, *Nuclear Strategy*, pp. 148-150.
- To Murray and Grimsley, the impact of geography upon strategic culture may be illustrated by the proximate and miniscule Israel versus the massive and remote United States. Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, "Introduction: On strategy," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, Williamson Murray, MacGregor Know and Alvin Bernstein, (eds.), pp. 1-23 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 7.
- Many authors would classify this as effecting military strategic culture or service strategic culture.
- This abstract concept is summarized more simply by Gray: groups may be categorized based upon holistic, monochromic, one-thing-at-a-time cultures, or polychromic, everything-is-interconnected, Cartesian thinking cultures. See Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 149.
- Ibid.*
- Ibid.*, p. 150. These grand strategic tools could include overt military power, diplomacy, espionage, and covert action, economic sanctions, etc.
- The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *Weltanschauung* as, "...a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint." See Merriam-Webster Dictionary, *Weltanschauung*, last accessed 19 May 2014, at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weltanschauung>.
- Edward Lock, "Refining strategic culture: return of the second generation," in *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, Issue 3 (July 2010), pp. 685-708 at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000276>.
- Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd edition. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), p. 17.
- Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 131.
- Theo Farrell, "Strategic Culture and American Empire," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer-Fall 2005), p. 10.
- William S. Maltby, "The Origins of a Global Strategy: England from 1558 to 1713," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, pp. 151-177.
- Tuvia Ben-Moshe, *Churchill: Strategy and History* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992), p. 7.
- The famous naval strategist Julian Corbett quotes Francis Bacon in stating, "...he that commands the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will ..." Julian Stafford Corbett, *The Project Gutenberg eBook, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, last accessed 07 May 2014, at <http://gutenberg.readingroom.org/1/5/0/7/15076/15076-h/15076-h.htm>.
- Norman Gibbs, "British Strategic Doctrine, 1918-1939," *The Theory and Practice of War: Essays Presented to Captain B.H. Liddell Hart*, Michael Howard (ed.), pp.185-212, (London: Cassell and Company, 1965), p.188. The 'two-power standard' refers to the Royal Navy's requirement for greater capability than the next two powers.

19. B.H. Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932), p. 37. Bryant concurs, stating the British Army developed a corresponding tradition which, "... rested on the history of a sea-based Army which had always had to fight with inadequate resources and which, by using sea-power to hold the enemy with the minimum of force along the widest possible circumference while concentrating striking-strength at the point where it could be most effectively used." Arthur Bryant, *Triumph in the West: Completing the War Diaries of Field Marshal Viscount Alanbrooke* (London: The Reprint Society, 1960), p. 32.
20. Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart labeled this disciplined assault on a country's commerce by the Royal Navy an "essentially businesslike tradition," and an 'economy of force.' Liddell Hart, pp. 37-41.
21. Ben-Moshe, p. 9. This anti-Army attitude received considerable political attention in Britain as a result of the devastating British losses on the Western Front in the First World War, and the writings of the very influential thinker Liddell Hart and his book, *The British Way in Warfare*. His concepts, however, have, in the last eighty-plus years, been heavily criticized.
22. Of 8,904,467 British Empire soldiers mobilized for "The Great War," 908,371 were killed, 2,090,212 were wounded and 191,652 became prisoner or were Missing in Action. See PBS, "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," last accessed 7 May 2014, at http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html. Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 150.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 139. Gray and Hew Strachan agree that resistance to revolutionary change was an element of Britain's strategic culture or "way of war," despite the British Army's struggle to solve the "riddle of the trenches" on the First World War's Western Front.
24. Britain's military strategic culture embraced Intelligence, Deception, Science and Technology, and Innovation. David Jablonsky, *Churchill and Hitler: Essays on the Political-Military Direction of Total War* (Ilford, UK: Frank Cass&Co, 1994), p. 80.
25. Gibbs, p. 187. Gibbs subsequently labels this "Britain's traditional strategy." *Ibid.*, p. 190.
26. Steven E. Lobell, "Britain's Grand Strategy During the 1930s," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance Between the World Wars*, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman and Steven E. Lobell (eds.), pp. 147-170 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
27. Gibbs, p. 189.
28. Crocker explains that statecraft is, "... the smart application of power: when wits, wallets, and muscle all pull together ... [it] uses all of the available assets and resources of a society and assures effective coordination between all the arms of foreign policy." Chester A. Crocker, "The Place of Grand Strategy, Statecraft, and Power in Conflict Management," in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Divided World*, Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (eds.), pp. 355-367 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007).
29. Donald Nuechterlein describes national interest, "... as the aspirations and goals of sovereign entities in the international arena-perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relation to the sovereign states comprising its external environment." See Don Macnamara, "Canada's National and International Security Interests," in *Canada's National Security in the Post-9/11 World: Strategy, Interests, and Threats*, David S. McDonough (ed.), pp. 45-56 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 48.
30. C.I.D. 195th Meeting, 13th February 1925; 196th Meeting, 19th February 1925; 200th Meeting, 22nd June 1925. Memorandum by CIGS for Cabinet. C.P. 116(25), quoted in Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1989), pp. 93-94. This quote reflects Lord Palmerston's 1848 statement: "We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow." Lobell, p. 147.
31. Steven E. Lobell, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Grand Strategy Between the World Wars," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy*, pp. 1-36.
32. Lobell, "Britain's Grand Strategy during the 1930s," p. 17.
33. For an excellent overview of imperial policing and British colonial 'small wars,' see Lt. Col. Robert M. Cassidy, The U.S. Army, "The British Army and Counterinsurgency: The Salience of Military Culture," last accessed 2 May 2014, at https://www.army.mil/%20professionalWriting/volumes/volume3/november_2005/11_05_2.html.
34. Liddell Hart, p. 127.
35. Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), p. 152.
36. Sinnreich believed the perpetually under-resourced British Army had a tradition of heroism over intellectual innovation, which formed intellectual complacency. See Richard Hart Sinnreich, "About Turn: British Strategic Transformation from Salisbury to Grey," in *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich and James Lacey (eds.), pp. 111-146 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
37. Cassidy suggests, "Stability operations have dominated the British Army experience, and it has embraced them as central to the institution." Cassidy.
38. Gibbs, p. 205. The economy was referred to as "the fourth arm of defence" as Britain's strong economy and large war chest gave it a financial advantage over its enemies during a long war. See Lobell, "Britain's Grand Strategy during the 1930s," p. 167.
39. Farrell, p. 4.
40. Gibbs, p. 191.
41. Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment: The Dilemma of British Defence Policy in the Era of the Two World Wars* (London: The Ashfield Press, 1989), p. 52.
42. Here the modern lexicon has been employed thus: Joint and Inter-agency.
43. Williamson Murray, "The Collapse of Empire: British Strategy 1919-1945," in *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, Williamson Murray, MacGregor Know and Alvin Bernstein (eds.), pp. 393-427 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
44. Alaric Searle, "Inter-service Debate and the Origins of Strategic Culture: The 'Principles of War' in the British Armed Forces, 1919-1939," in *War in History*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2013), pp. 30-31.
45. Andrew Roberts, *Masters and Commanders: How Roosevelt, Churchill, Marshall and Alanbrooke Won the War in the West* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), p. 15. Purportedly, Brooke co-invented the 'creeping barrage.'
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 102-103. Brooke replaced Admiral Sir Dudley Pound as the Chairman due to the naval fiasco of the escape of the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau* and *Prinz Eugen* on 12 February 1942.
47. Charles F. Brower, "The Commander-in-Chief and TORCH," New York: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, 12 November 2002, last accessed 14 October 2009, at <http://docs.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/cbtorch.html>. Bower suggests that Britain and America were heavily influenced by their very different Great War experiences.
48. Leo J. Meyer, "The Decision to Invade North Africa (TORCH)," in *Center of Military History Publication 72-7: Command Decisions*, Kent Roberts Greenfield (ed.), pp. 173-198 (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1960), 175. Indeed, Neilson states Stalin believed that the British would fight to the last drop of Soviet blood. See Keith Neilson, "The British Way in Warfare and Russia," in *The British Way in Warfare: Power and the International System, 1856-1956: Essays in Honour of David French*, Keith Neilson and Greg Kennedy (eds.), pp. 7-27 (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010).
49. The disparity between German and Allied forces in early 1942 was six- to- one, but Britain had a healthy respect for the *Wehrmacht's* capabilities. Brower.
50. Lobell, "Britain's Grand Strategy during the 1930s," p. 165.
51. Meyer, p. 181.
52. Roberts, p. 57.
53. W.G.F. Jackson, "Overlord," *Normandy 1944* (London, 1979), p. 46, quoted in Carlo D'Este, *Decision in Normandy: The Unwritten Story of Montgomery and the Allied Campaign* (London: Pan Books, 1984), p. 25. Meyer agrees that this style of warfare was an element of Britain's military tradition: "Such a 'peripheral strategy' came naturally to British leaders. They had followed it so often in earlier wars against continental powers that it had become deeply imbedded in England's military tradition." Meyer, p. 175.
54. Neilson, p. 23.
55. Bryant, p. 28.
56. See Williamson Murray, Historynet.com, "Operation Torch: Allied Invasion of North Africa," last accessed 28 Feb 2014, at <http://www.historynet.com/%20operation-torch-allied-invasion-of-north-africa-.htm>. Bryant explains that Brooke, understood the peripheral strategy was not the main effort itself, "Brooke's view of the Italian campaign remained what it had always been: that it was not an end in itself but a means to an end." Bryant, p. 203.
57. Michael Howard, "American and British Strategy. Memorandum by the United States and British Chief of Staff (WWII) at Washington War Conference, December 1941," Appendix I from *Grand Strategy IV August 1942-September 1943, History of the Second World War* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1972), p. 597.
58. MHI Handy Interview 1974 section 3, page 42, quoted in Roberts, p. 71.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
60. Bryant, p. 36.
61. ALAB 11/64 quoted in Roberts, p. 104.
62. Christopher Coker, "Between Iraq and a Hard Place: Multinational Co-operation, Afghanistan and Strategic Culture," in *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 151, No. 5 (October 2006), p. 18.

DND photo IS06-2017-0005-039 by Master Corporal Jennifer Kusche



Silence reigns in the early morning light at the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in Vimy, France, on 7 April 2017, one hundred years to the day after the epic battle.

Asian- and Black-Canadians at Vimy Ridge

by Mathias Joost

Major Mathias Joost, CD, is officer in charge of the war diaries/operational records at the National Defence Directorate of History and Heritage. His areas of interest include the Air Reserves and visible minorities in the military.

Introduction

The Battle of Vimy Ridge is considered the quintessential “Canadian” battle of the First World War, celebrated in Canadian mythology as the moment when Canada became a nation and as having bought it a seat at the Versailles Peace Treaty. The troops involved were more than just of British and Canadian origin – in effect, White-Canadians. Asian- and Black-Canadians also fought at Vimy Ridge, their story mainly untold as to how they got to Vimy, and the nature and extent of their participation in the battle.

Conventional narratives of Black-Canadian participation in the First World War focus upon the contributions of No. 2 Construction Battalion, Canada’s largest predominantly-Black unit of that conflict. Forgotten are the many Black-Canadians who enlisted in battalions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), for whom the common mythology indicates that they were not able to enlist in the CEF. Thus, there should not have been any

Black-Canadian soldiers at the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The truth, however, is far different.

Japanese-Canadians and their participation in the CEF during the First World War is also an oft-overlooked subject. They too had problems enlisting in the CEF, but they were eventually accepted in ‘White’ battalions. Their arrival in the United Kingdom was just in time to be trained and deployed, so that they could participate in the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In terms of numbers, the soldiers from both of these ethnic groups were small, yet they served with as great a determination as any other soldier. By the time of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, there were about 140 Black-Canadian soldiers who had enlisted in the combat battalions of the CEF, as well as 186 Japanese-Canadians. Yet, at the battle itself, only about 30 Black soldiers were involved, and about 130 Japanese-Canadians. Considering that there were at least 212 Japanese-Canadians who served in the CEF during the war, and about 1250 Black-Canadians, including the Black-Caribbean and African-Americans who served, the disparity in numbers is worth investigating.¹ Further, their contributions to the Battle should be considered an example of the desire to prove themselves *equal to* and *worthy of* being considered Canadian. This article will examine the means by which Black- and Japanese-Canadians were accepted into the CEF, how this affected their presence at Vimy Ridge, and the nature of their participation.²

Beginnings

When Japanese-Canadians in the lower mainland of British Columbia were unable to enlist in CEF battalions being recruited in that area in 1914 and 1915, they found units ready to accept them in Alberta. It started slowly. The 13th Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR), enlisted two on 6 April 1916, the 175th Battalion, one on 6 February, the 191st Battalion, three at the end of May, and the 192nd Battalion, two on 18 May. Starting in June, Japanese-Canadians were accepted into the four battalions in small numbers each week, so that by the time each departed for the UK, they consisted of the numbers and allocations as noted in Table 1.

Unit	Number of Japanese-Canadians ³	Date of Departure for UK
13 th Battalion, CMR	41	June 1916
175 th Battalion	57	October 1916
191 st Battalion	22	March 1917
192 nd Battalion	50	November 1916

Table 1: Japanese-Canadians in Alberta-based battalions.

Unlike the Japanese-Canadians who were concentrated in four battalions, Black-Canadians were scattered throughout the CEF, since they enlisted from Vancouver to Halifax. Further, they enlisted over a much longer period of time. By the end of 1916, at least 139 had joined combat units.³ While the formation of No. 2 Construction Battalion was supposed to provide an outlet for those Black men who wished to serve, many Black-Canadians decided to enlist in infantry battalions, even at the risk of being rejected. The result was that they could be found in small numbers, normally clusters of under- five, in battalions throughout the CEF.

“Unlike the Japanese-Canadians who were concentrated in four battalions, Black-Canadians were scattered throughout the CEF, since they enlisted from Vancouver to Halifax.”

On arrival in the UK, the battalions in which Black- and Japanese-Canadians had enlisted were broken up, with the exception of most battalions that crossed the Atlantic as part of the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions. When the four battalions in which Japanese-Canadians had enlisted arrived in the UK, they were dispersed. The Japanese-Canadians were kept together in their respective platoons and transferred to the 10th, 50th and 52nd Battalions. That said, the men of the 191st Battalion arrived in the UK in April 1917, and were thus too late to participate at the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

The Black-Canadians

However, the situation for Black-Canadians was far different. Of the 122 Black soldiers whose units made it to the UK by the end of 1916 and are known to have enlisted in the combat arms, at least 85 were unable to serve at Vimy.⁴ There were a number of reasons for this. Some had been left behind in Canada or Bermuda for medical or other reasons, or they were in the process of being released after having already made it to the United Kingdom.⁵ The main reason for release was for medical issues, as the medical examination performed upon enlistment was, *at best*, cursory, and it often missed back problems, heart issues, flat feet, or other medical concerns that precluded an individual from service.⁶

The biggest systemic reason for Black-Canadians not being at Vimy was administrative. There were 33 Black soldiers who were held in reserve battalions after their units had been broken up. While White-Canadians in the same units were quickly sent to front-line battalions, Black-Canadians literally languished in the UK.⁷ Some would be sent to the front after the Battle of Vimy Ridge, while a few served the entire war in the UK. Starting in mid-1916, those that arrived in the UK were less likely to be deployed to the front-line units, or even to spend the rest of their wartime service in the UK. This was likely the result of prejudice on the part of senior staff at the

various headquarters, but especially from Major-General Samuel Benfield Steele, commander of the British South Eastern District.⁸

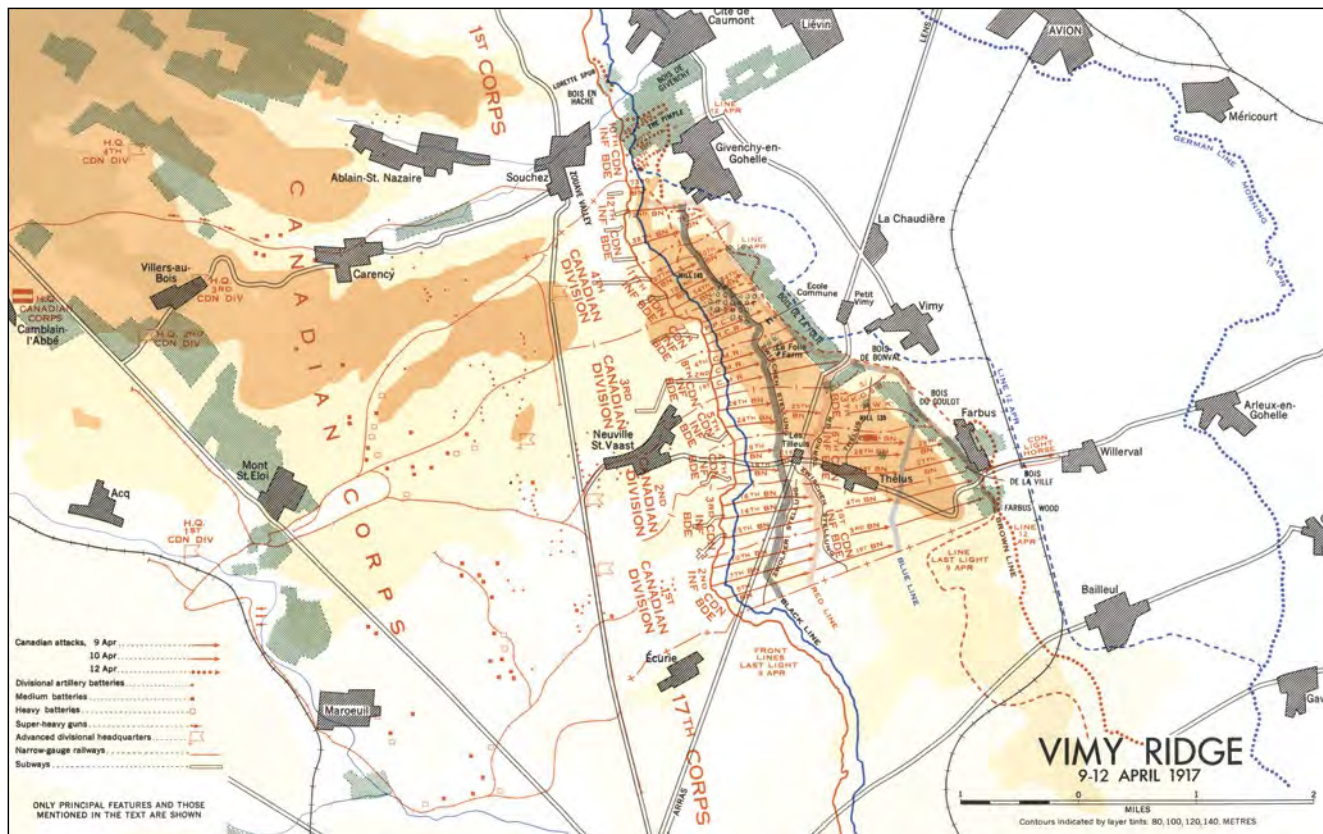
Killed in Action	Died of Illness	Recovering from Wounds	Transferred to No. 2 Construction Battalion	Held in UK – Reserve Battalion	Released (Medical or Other)	Unit Not at Vimy	File Not yet Available	At Vimy
9	1	4	17	33	19	6	16	27

Table 2: Black-Canadian soldiers and their disposition before Vimy Ridge.

For at least six Black-Canadians, they were in units that were not part of the order of battle for Vimy Ridge, units such as stationary hospitals and railway troops. Perhaps one of the more extraordinary reasons for not being at Vimy Ridge was that of a Black artilleryman who was awaiting transfer to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). At a time when the RFC was not accepting visible minorities for enlistment, his chain of command was supporting his application. He was successful in his endeavour.⁹

Thus, despite the number of Black-Canadians who had arrived in the UK in combat arms regiments being comparable to that of the Japanese-Canadians, there were fewer who were available to serve at Vimy. At best, the current calculations are that around 42 fought during the Battle, although this is likely to be reduced as personnel files become more widely available.

DND/Directorate of History and Heritage



The Vimy Assault Plan

The attack on Vimy Ridge was a straightforward frontal assault on the German positions. All four Canadian divisions would be involved in the attack, with 850 Canadian guns and 280 British guns providing support, as well as the entire British 5th Division. The artillery was to demolish the German trenches, keep the Germans in their dugouts and suppress German artillery fire. At 5:30 AM, the artillery opened up, with the infantry advancing behind the barrage. Because of the size of the ridge, and the fact that the front lines lay at an angle to the ridge, two of the Canadian divisions had a longer distance to gain than the others. The 1st Division had 4,000 yards to cover, while the 4th Division had only 700 yards to cross, albeit over steeper terrain. Four objectives were laid out in sequence, the Black, Red, Blue, and Brown lines. For the 3rd and 4th Divisions, their objective was the Red Line, while the 1st and 2nd Divisions, having farther to go, had to reach the Brown line. Each division had its own strategy for how to reach its objectives. In the case of the 2nd Brigade, each battalion would have a two-company front, with the first and second waves coming from the first two companies and taking the Black line, with the third and fourth waves from the remaining two companies taking the Red line. Once these objectives were secured, the next battalion would pass through and take the Blue and Brown lines. To help suppress the

“To help suppress the German soldiers in their trenches and then consolidate the positions, each battalion’s Lewis machine guns would accompany the soldiers forward.”

German soldiers in their trenches and then consolidate the positions, each battalion’s Lewis machine guns would accompany the soldiers forward.¹⁰

The Japanese-Canadians

By the end of 1916, about 182 Japanese-Canadians had enlisted in the CEF, of whom about 160 had arrived in the UK by the time of Vimy Ridge. The 22 Japanese soldiers in the 191st Battalion were still in Canada, the battalion only proceeding to the UK in late-March 1917. Of those who had arrived in the UK by the time of the Battle of Vimy Ridge, 148 of them were in three battalions, the 13th CMR, the 175th Battalion, and the 192nd Battalion. Of the 14 known to have arrived in the UK in other battalions, at least three fought at Vimy. Of the remainder, four were still in the UK, while two had already been in combat, one who was recovering from his wounds at the time of Vimy Ridge, and one who had been killed in action.

Thirty-eight Japanese-Canadian soldiers of the 13th Battalion, CMR, departed for France on 27 August 1916. They were first sent to the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) Depot, and then to the PPCLI at the front, after which they were transferred to the 52nd Battalion, arriving in place on 4 October. This was just in time to join the battalion as it moved into the front



The Taking of Vimy Ridge, Easter Monday 1917, by Richard Jack.

lines at Courcellette. The soldiers of the 175th arrived in the UK in October 1916, and after training, were sent to the 50th Battalion on 2 February 1917. However, the deployment of the 192nd was not as smooth. Most arrived with the 10th Battalion in early-December 1916. However, some arrived between January and March, while others arrived at the Canadian Base Depot in late-January 1917, but only deployed to the 10th Battalion after Vimy.¹¹

By the time of Vimy Ridge, Japanese-Canadians were serving principally in three battalions, with those from the 13th Battalion,

CMR, arriving in France in September 1916, and those of the 175th Battalion arriving on 2 February 1917. In the lead-up to Vimy Ridge, the Canadians raided the German lines every night from 20 March to 8 April.¹² Thus, the Japanese-Canadians of the 50th and 52nd Battalions had seen some fighting and had received some casualties. A few of the injured had returned to their respective battalions in time for Vimy, while others were still recovering from their wounds/injuries, or from other medical problems, such as influenza.

Original Unit	Unit at Vimy Ridge	Killed in Action	Recovering from Wounds	Held in UK – Reserve Battalion	File Unavailable
13 th Bn, CMR	52 nd Bn	2	10	0	13
175 th Bn	50 th Bn	1	8	0	17
192 nd Bn	10 th Bn	0	4	4	12

Table 3: Disposition of Japanese-Canadians prior to Battle of Vimy Ridge.

In terms of the fighting at Vimy Ridge, the Japanese-Canadians of the three battalions had substantially different experiences. The 10th Battalion ‘went over the parapets’ at 5:30 AM. The first wave suffered more than 90 killed and 250 wounded in the first 15 minutes of battle. A small percentage of these were casualties from friendly artillery fire. However, German machine gun and rifle fire accounted for the remainder. With the German machine guns overrun at 5:47 AM, the first two waves reached their objective. The third and fourth waves took heavy casualties in helping

to clear the Black line trenches, with only one officer being left uninjured before they had even begun their advance from the Black line to the Red line. However, by 7:07 AM, the Red line was achieved, the German trenches began to be cleared, and the position was being consolidated.¹³

As the next battalion passed through, the 10th were able to return to their original start point that evening. After a day of rest on 10 April, the battalion moved forward into the Red line



DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-003117

A Japanese-Canadian soldier shaving outside his dug-out.

positions at 6:30 PM the next day. 12 April resulted in them moving forward again, this time to relieve the 3rd Battalion at the Blue line positions where they remained in support of the 8th Battalion as they moved forward yet again on 14 April.¹⁴

Despite the carnage levied upon the 10th Battalion, the casualties among the Japanese-Canadians were light. Only two were killed, one on 9 April, and one on 11 April (Privates Kojima and Migita). The number injured/wounded was also light, numbering only three – on each 9 April, 12 April, and 14 April. One soldier suffered a shrapnel wound to the chest, one a severe shrapnel wound to the left leg, and one a slight rifle wound to the left hand.

The 50th Battalion was initially in held reserve, but went into battle at 3:15 PM on 10 April. These men quickly reached their objectives, and by 3:45 PM, they were consolidating their positions. Later that evening, the 47th Battalion relieved them. Casualties were 57 killed, 129 wounded, and 31 missing. The next morning, the battalion was reorganized into two companies, and they received orders to attack “the Pimple.” The battalion attacked at 5:00 AM on 12 April. They took their objective, but remained under artillery and sniper fire throughout the day and night. This attack resulted in a further three soldiers killed, 38 wounded, and seven missing. The battalion then moved forward a further 1000 yards at 5:30 PM on 13 April, and was finally relieved at 8:30 PM that evening.¹⁵

The casualties of the 50th Battalion were slightly lower than those of the 10th Battalion, and yet, there were higher casualties among the Japanese-Canadians of the 50th, compared to their counterparts in the 10th. Of those with the 50th, five were killed in the attack on 10 April (Privates Hamaguchi, Motohashi, Narita, Tada, and Takenchi), and two were wounded – one with a serious gunshot wound to the left leg, and one with a serious gunshot wound to the scalp. Another Japanese-Canadian soldier was killed the next day (Private Tsuchiya), and a seventh on 12 April (Private Sobuye). Before the 52nd was withdrawn, a final Japanese-Canadian was wounded/injured at Vimy, receiving a serious concussion and bruising from German artillery fire on 13 April.

The 52nd Battalion had an easier time at Vimy Ridge since they had been held in reserve on 9 April, but ready to move at one hour’s notice. On 11 April, they began the relief of the Canadian Mounted Rifles at 4:30 PM. They remained there throughout 12 April, but the next day, they moved forward to relieve the 60th Battalion and to occupy their lines situated on the crest of the ridge.¹⁶ As a result, they suffered only three dead during the battle, and no casualties among the Japanese-Canadians.

There were at least 20 Black soldiers who served in the infantry at Vimy Ridge. Of these, eight were fated to be killed before the end of the war.¹⁷ As these soldiers were scattered throughout the entire CEF, they likewise went into battle across the whole of the Vimy front, and their experiences varied according to the activities of their respective battalions.



DND photo by Master Corporal Shilo Adamson

A portion of the Canadian trenches at Vimy Ridge.

Because Black-Canadians were able to enlist in a larger number of units than Japanese-Canadians, they were also present in other branches of the army. Infanteer Archibald Perkins was attached to the 11th Canadian Infantry Brigade HQ, while Infanteer David Crosby was attached to the 2nd Division Signals. There were at least three Black-Canadians serving with the artillery. Ruthven Pegus was with the 9th (Howitzer) Battery of the 3rd Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery (CFA), Raymond Vignale was with the 5th Brigade, CFA, and Lyman Hogan was with the 4th Brigade, CFA.¹⁸ On that cold morning of 9 April, the men of the artillery built up a sweat as they fired their guns as quickly as possible to soften up, destroy, or suppress the German defences, something that the infantry greatly appreciated and commented upon. In part, their accuracy came from having commenced this work back on 20 March.¹⁹

There were also Black engineers at Vimy. Sapper Miles Dymond served with the 3rd Field Company, while Sapper Frank Bollen was with the 107th Battalion, which had been converted to a Pioneer Battalion.²⁰ At Vimy, the 107th Battalion had been busy in the days before the assault, laying cable and preparing a light rail track from the Arian ammunition dump to the front lines. On 9 April, the battalion had three companies laying cable through No Man's Land as it was taken, thus helping to provide communications for the battalions at the front.²¹

William Rider-Rider/DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-003201



Three Black-Canadian soldiers in a captured German dugout during the Canadian advance east of Arras.

Division	Battalion	Name
1st Division	3 rd Battalion	Randolph Winslow
	7 th Battalion	Lancelot Joseph Bertrand
	10 th Battalion	Frederick Firth
	14 th Battalion	Charles Langton
	16 th Battalion	William Henderson
2nd Division	25 th Battalion	James Eatman
	26 th Battalion	Ralph Stoutley
	26 th Battalion	Norman Ash
3rd Division	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Gordon Johnson
	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Jeremiah Jones
	The Royal Canadian Regiment	Percy Martin
	4 th Canadian Mounted Rifles	Rankin Wheary
	4 th Canadian Mounted Rifles	James A. Post
	58 th Battalion	Henry Thomas Shepherd
4th Division	38 th Battalion	Sylvester Long
	50 th Battalion	Samuel Watts
	75 th Battalion	Charles Marshall
	78 th Battalion	Ethelbert "Curley" Christian
	87 th Battalion	George Lam
	87 th Battalion	Arthur Duff

Author

Table 4: Black-Canadian soldiers in Vimy Ridge Infantry Battalions.

Black-Canadians were equally involved in the fighting across the entire front. They too fought bravely, and suffered casualties. The obstacles they overcame in the fighting were myriad, and they were a microcosm of the experience of the Canadian infantry as a whole. Not all their experiences can be noted here, due to the sheer number of battalions involved. However, a sampling will provide an idea of what happened to them.

Having fewer soldiers at the battle, there were naturally fewer casualties among the Black-Canadians at Vimy than those suffered by the Japanese-Canadians. There was one soldier who was killed – Frederick Firth of the 10th Battalion. As noted in the write-up on the Japanese-Canadians of the 10th Battalion, this battalion suffered many casualties from machine gun and rifle fire. Private Firth's body was never recovered, and thus, his name is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial.

The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) also suffered casualties from German strongpoints and machine gun fire. Their advance started well with C and D Companies advancing behind the artillery fire that kept the enemy down with the result that the Black line was captured with just a few casualties. A and B Companies then passed through C and D Companies, but by then, they came into range of German forces whose positions had not been taken or had been destroyed by the artillery. At La Folie Wood, C and D Companies ran into several strongpoints that held up their

attack and caused heavy casualties. Once these strongpoints were overcome, the next problem became the Germans still in control of Hill 145, which the 4th Division had not taken. As a result, snipers did most of the killing. The RCR took their objectives, in the process, capturing five German machine guns. However, 50 soldiers were killed, 159 wounded, and 65 were missing, some of whom were later found to be wounded.²² Gordon Johnson made it through the fighting without any physical injury. However, Percy Martin suffered a gunshot wound to the left shoulder on 9 April, which kept him in hospital until 13 May.

Perhaps the most distinguished action by a Black-Canadian in the RCR that day was accomplished by Jeremiah Jones, who had been hit by shrapnel. Before being pulled from the battlefield, Jones single-handedly attacked a German machine gun post that was holding up his platoon's advance. In the wake of his grenade attack, the surviving Germans surrendered to him. Jones then had them carry

the machine gun back to the battalion headquarters, where it was placed before his commanding officer. Jones then went back into battle and was wounded by shrapnel in his left arm, which kept him in hospital for two months. For his actions, Jones was recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the second-highest award for valour for enlisted Canadian soldiers at the time, but this award was never approved.²³

“Having fewer soldiers at the battle, there were naturally fewer casualties among the Black-Canadians at Vimy than those suffered by the Japanese-Canadians.”



Advancing through “No Man’s Land” amid barbed wire during the battle.

W.I. Castle/ DND/Library and Archives Canada/PA-001020



akg-images/WHA/World History Archive/AKG 1066772

A Canadian Vimy casualty, being evacuated by captured German prisoner stretcher bearers.

It was not just enemy machine gun fire that resulted in casualties. German artillery, although under attack, was still able to return fire, although at a reduced level and often without precise targeting from the front lines. In the 78th Battalion, Ethelbert "Curley" Christian was a runner, carrying messages from the companies on the attack to headquarters, or between the headquarters of different battalions. At Vimy, he was buried in a trench by artillery fire and not found for two days. As it materialized, he was barely alive when found, and was even more fortunate when being carried off the battlefield when two of his stretcher bearers were killed by enemy fire. As all four of his limbs were badly crushed and had been without proper blood circulation, gangrene set in with the result that all four of his limbs had to be amputated. He survived the war and eventually became an advocate for veterans.

The 4th Division had the most difficulty at Vimy. For the 87th Battalion, 520 all ranks 'went over the top' at 5:30 AM. By the end of the battle, 149 had been killed and 155 wounded among the ranks, which, if the officers were included, was a casualty rate of 60 percent. The battalion's goal was to take the approaches to Hill 145. Right away, there were problems, as C Company on the right flank was held up by rifle and machine gun fire from the front and the right flank, where the 102nd Battalion was also having problems advancing. While A and B Companies reached their

objectives, they only did so with heavy casualties. A Company had only one officer and 12 men remaining by noon, while B Company had only a sergeant and 15 men securing the centre. It was only with help from the 75th Battalion, which was moving through them to take up the advance, as well as the 102nd Battalion on the right, that trenches were secured. The 87th Battalion was pulled from the line on 11 April.²⁴

Given the hard fighting that the 87th Battalion experienced, it is fortunate for Privates Arthur Duff and George Lam that they were able to escape physical injury during this tough fighting. Duff had enlisted in the 77th Battalion in August 1915, joined the 87th in November 1916, and was promptly sent on a Lewis Gun course. He was wounded in June 1917, but remained on duty. However, Private Duff was killed in action in November that year. Private Lam enlisted in the 132nd Battalion in December 1915. He was taken on strength of the 87th on 6 December 1916 and wounded only once, in May 1917, a wound which kept him out of the 87th until late-December 1917. For both of them, Vimy was their first major battle.²⁵

The actions of one Black soldier at Vimy Ridge were to lead to him being awarded the Military Cross. Lancelot Joseph Bertrand enlisted in the 11th Battalion at Valcartier in 1914, and when the unit was broken up, he was attached to the 7th Battalion just in

time for the Second Battle of Ypres which he survived, despite the battalion being all but wiped out. In the battalion's next major fight, the Battle of Festubert, Private Bertrand was wounded in the shoulder. He was transported to the United Kingdom to recover and was to remain there, working at the Depot Headquarters, to allow time for his shoulder to recover as it was still weak. However, his abilities were duly recognized, and he was quickly promoted to sergeant as of 15 July 1915, and then recommended for commissioning, which came through on 25 August 1916.²⁶ He is one of just two Black infantry officers of the war known to this author.

On 20 October 1916, Lieutenant Bertrand was taken on strength again by the 7th Battalion. On the morning of 9 April, runners reported to him that first, the company commander of No. 4 Company, and then a more senior lieutenant of the company, had been killed. Bertrand took over command of the company when they were still 100 yards short of the Bismarck Trench. On arriving at the Black line, he learned another lieutenant had also been injured. Lieutenant Bertrand then began to deploy the company to ensure that it was in contact with its flanks, and then began to consolidate the company's position. In so doing, he had only one NCO to assist him, a corporal. When the company moved on to the Red objective, he had only 60 soldiers on strength in total.²⁷ For his actions on this morning, Lieutenant Bertrand was awarded the Military Cross.

Black-Canadians continued to be enlisted in individual battalions, with 1916 being the most active year of recruitment. They were not, however, used as replacements for other Black-Canadians in the field, but rather, were put into a general pool, most of whom never made it to the continent. When it came to conscription, large numbers of Black-Canadians were enrolled, over 300 having been identified. However, less than 10 percent made it to front line service of those known to have arrived in the UK.²⁸

The voluntary enlistment of Japanese-Canadians died down after the last members of 191st Battalion were accepted in early-1917. This battalion was broken up when it arrived in the UK, its Japanese-Canadians sent to the 10th and 50th Battalions to reinforce their Japanese-Canadian platoons. When it came to conscription, few were accepted – less than 30 having been identified, and there were less than five voluntary enlistments in 1918.

While seven of the Black-Canadians who served at Vimy were killed in later action during the war, 37 Japanese-Canadians who survived the battle were subsequently fatal casualties. Of the total number of soldiers from each group that participated at Vimy, these were high percentage fatality rates. The Japanese-Canadians must certainly have been ferocious fighters as the numbers of their members who were repatriated as medically unfit due to wounds/injuries was quite high.²⁹ A total of 12 of

them were decorated with the Military Medal (MM), one of them receiving a bar to his MM. Among Black-Canadians, there was one Military Cross recipient, five Military Medals awarded, as well as one Distinguished Conduct Medal.³⁰

Conclusions

Getting from the UK to Vimy was a tale of dichotomies for the two groups. While the Japanese-Canadians were able to remain together as a coherent group, Black-Canadians were not. In part, this may have been because it was easier to send an already-organized company forward, yet this does not explain why individual Black-Canadians seem to have been singled out for retention in the UK and had not been sent to the front as reinforcements. Thus, while the two groups had roughly equal numbers of soldiers overseas at the end of 1916, there were more Japanese-Canadians at Vimy because some administrative process held back a good percentage of Black-Canadians.

At the battle itself, the distance that some divisions had to cover, or the nature of the terrain would likely have awed the soldiers at Vimy. For most of the Black-Canadians who participated, they had already met the German defences, and the tasks set before the Canadians were ones which would likely have struck them with some worry. For the Japanese-Canadians, this was the first major battle for them, some having only just arrived. And yet, when it came to engaging the enemy, both groups showed their mettle. Not even age was a factor. Jeremiah Jones was over 50 when he took on a German machine gun post...

The actual character of the fighting at Vimy depended upon the battalion in which each individual served. The Japanese-Canadians serving in the 52nd Battalion saw little action because they had been held in reserve. This also happened to Black-Canadians. When it did come to combat, there was no reticence to fight on the part of those who 'went over the parapets.' While there were more Japanese-Canadian casualties than Black-Canadian casualties, this was more a result of the battalions in which they served, the opposition they encountered, and just 'blind luck' that some soldiers escaped unscathed, and others became casualties.

The Black- and Japanese-Canadians who fought at Vimy demonstrated that they were as worthy of being considered soldiers of Canada as any other group in the battle. These two groups of ethnic soldiers may have been small in numbers at Vimy, but their presence was a signal that they too were equal to any other ethnic group in Canada when it came to fighting for their country.



“The Japanese-Canadians must certainly have been ferocious fighters as the numbers of their members who were repatriated as medically unfit due to wounds/injuries was quite high.”

NOTES

1. These numbers are based upon the author's lists of confirmed Japanese-Canadians and of Black-Canadians, as well as African-Americans and Black-Caribs, who enlisted or were conscripted into the CEF. For the purposes of this study and simplicity, "Black-Canadians" will be used to represent men of African origin who were resident in Canada, the Caribbean, and the United States who enlisted and served in the CEF.
2. There were also 12 Chinese-Canadians, 10 Sikh-Canadians, and one Korean who are known to have enlisted. Because of their small numbers in the CEF, they are being excluded from this study.
3. The number of Black-Canadians is based upon the author's research. The figure of 139 does not include those who enlisted in No. 2 Construction Battalion. Hence, the author recognizes that he has likely not included many Black-Canadians for whom a further source could not be found. LAC is digitizing the personnel files of soldiers of the First World War. However, the process takes time, and information is not yet available for some Black- and Japanese Canadians.
4. The statistics and causes are based upon the author's review of personnel files that are available online at the aforementioned LAC database, "Soldiers of the First World War." Not all of the personnel files of the soldiers who have been identified as being in the CEF at the time of Vimy Ridge are available for download. However, in some cases, additional authoritative information exists for some of these soldiers.
5. The 163rd Battalion had enlisted at least 16 Black soldiers while stationed in Bermuda.
6. For more information on the issue of medical releases and the issues with proper medical examinations, see Nicholas James Clarke, *Unwanted Warriors: The Rejected Volunteers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (Ottawa: Doctoral Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2009).
7. Based upon the author's examination of personnel files of White soldiers in the same units as Black-Canadians. Some Black-Canadians spent their entire wartime service in the UK.
8. During an inspection of a training depot on 21 June 1916, Steele noted a Black soldier and expressed his desire that he should be discharged. On the other hand, when he saw the platoon of Japanese-Canadians soldiers in 13th Battalion (Bn.), CMR, some weeks later, he lauded their military abilities. LAC, RG 9, III A1 Series 8 8-5-10e, Vol 45, Major-General Steele to Major-General Carson, 27 June 1916, pp. 3-4; and Major-General Steele to Major-General Carson, 20 July 1916, p. 2. My appreciation is extended to Dr. William Stewart for pointing out this file and hence its implications. For more on Steele's belief that Black men did not make good soldiers, see Samuel Benfield Steele, *Forty Years in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild & Stewart Ltd, 1919), pp.373-386, particularly 385-386. See also Roderick Charles MacLeod, "Steele, Sir Samuel Benfield," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography at <http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=7722>, accessed 30 July 2016, who notes that Steele considered Blacks a "natural subject race." Steele retained the position of commander South Eastern District until 1 March 1918.
9. There were a few other cases of visible minorities making it into the RFC, but all appear to have one thing in common – the support of a commanding officer. The Black-Canadian pilot would be commissioned and would serve his time ferrying



The Vimy Ridge Memorial.

- aircraft from an aircraft supply depot in northern France to units at the front. This activity was one in which hundreds of pilots partook.
10. 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade Instructions No. 3, dated 26 March 1917 found in LAC War Diary, 10th Battalion, Appendix 12
11. War Diaries of the 10th Battalion, 50th Battalion and 52nd Battalion. For the delays experienced by some of the Japanese soldiers of the 192nd, see, for instance, the personnel file of 898527 Tokutaro Iwamoto.
12. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army*, p. 234.
13. LAC, War Diary, 10th Battalion, Appendix 92
14. LAC, War Diary, 10th Battalion, April 1917.
15. LAC, War Diary, 50th Battalion, April 1917
16. LAC, War Diary, 52nd Battalion, April 1917.
17. Information on another 17 is not available as of the time of writing this article, as the personnel files have not been scanned and posted to the LAC website.
18. Ruthven Pegus enlisted on 25 September 1914, Lyman Hogan enlisted on 30 November 1914, and Raymond Vignale on 22 February 1915. LAC, Personnel files, 83666 Lyman William Hogan, 45370 Ruthven Ignatius Pegus and 246 Raymond Vignale.
19. Nicholson, *Official History of the Canadian Army*, pp. 249-250
20. Miles Dymond enlisted on 23 September 1914 in the 1st Field Company, Canadian Engineers. Frank Bollen had originally enlisted in the 71st Battalion, but had been released as being medically unfit. LAC, Personnel file, 5085 Miles Smith Dymond, and 127549 Frank Bollen and 225709 Frank Bollen.
21. LAC, War Diary, 107th Battalion.
22. LAC, War Diary, The Royal Canadian Regiment, April 1917, pp. 23-29; R.C. Featherstonhaugh, *The Royal Canadian Regiment, 1883-1933* (London, ON: The Royal Canadian Regiment, 1936), pp. 278-281.
23. Some of the documents in Jones' personnel file indicate it was a gunshot wound. LAC, Personnel file 716221, Jeremiah Jones. When writing his book about No.2 Construction Battalion, Calvin Ruck discovered that Jones had been recommended for the award, but had never received it. There was much evidence from survivors of the battalion and in newspapers about his actions at Vimy Ridge and about the recommendation. Because medals cannot be awarded beyond a certain time after an event, Jones could no longer receive the DCM. However, on 22 February 2010, Jeremiah Jones was posthumously awarded the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service. Jones' wound was sufficiently bad that it left him with a weak arm and a 30 percent disability categorization, for which, in part, he was subsequently given a medical discharge from the CEF. He never returned to the RCR after Vimy.
24. LAC War Diary, 87th Battalion, and William J. Patterson, *Soldiers of the Queen: The Canadian Grenadier Guards of Montreal, 1859-2009* (Montreal: The Canadian Grenadier Guards Corporation, 2009), pp. 116-118.
25. LAC, Personnel Files, 144504 Arthur John Duff and 793041 George Lam.
26. The synopsis of his service is based upon his personnel file. LAC, Personnel File, 21803 Lancelot Joseph Bertrand.
27. The synopsis of what Lieutenant Bertrand did at Vimy Ridge is based upon his report, which forms part of the 7th Battalion War Diary for Vimy Ridge. He would be killed at the Battle of Hill 70 in August 1917.
28. Based upon author's list of Black-Canadian conscripts, and excluding those for whom the personnel files were not yet available at the time of writing.
29. Author's review of personnel files of Japanese-Canadians not yet tabulated.
30. The Military Medal was awarded to 12 Japanese volunteers: Tokutaro Iwamoto (10th Bn), Masumi Mitsui (10th Bn), Tow Inouye (47th Bn), Yesaku Kubodera (49th Bn) Takezo Shirasago (50th Bn) Kiyoji Iizuka (50th Bn), Otojuro Yamamoto (MM and Bar) (50th Bn), Manichi Nakamura (50th Bn), Bunshiro Furukawa (50th Bn), Tominosuke Tanji 191 (50th Bn), and Yasuo Takashima 191 (50th Bn), Yoichi Kamakura (52nd Bn). Black-Canadians received the following recognition: Military Cross: – Lancelot Joseph Bertrand (7th Bn); Military Medal: David Crosby (25th Bn); Roy Fells (25th Bn); James Grant (83rd Bty, CFA); Percy Martin (RCR); John Cecil Lightfoot (8th Bn, CE); Distinguished Conduct Medal: James Post (4th Bn, CMR).



The Royal Military College of Canada campus, Kingston, Ontario.

Royal Military College of Canada Special Staff Assistance Visit Update

by Virginia Tattersall

In August 2016, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Jonathan Vance, directed the deployment of a Special Staff Assistance Visit (SSAV) to the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) in Kingston, Ontario. The SSAV was, by design, an administrative, fact finding investigation with a mandate to assess the overall climate, training environment, culture, and Regular Officer Training Plan (ROTP) programme construct at RMC, and how these factors impacted the morale, welfare, and success of the Naval and Officer Cadets (N/OCdts) at the College. The SSAV Team, led by Vice-Admiral (retired) G. Maddison, and Major-General (retired) D. Neasmith, and supported by a civilian academic advisor (Doctor Phil Bates), interviewed and received input from more than 400 stakeholders, including the leadership and staff from the Canadian Defence Academy, RMC military, academic and support staff, and, most importantly, more than 200 of the N/OCdts themselves. Their conclusions and recommendations were delivered in early-March 2017 via the “Special Staff Assistance Visit – Report on the Climate, Training Environment, Culture and ROTP Programme at the Royal Military College of Canada – Kingston.” The Chief of the Defence Staff accepted the report in its entirety and debriefed the staff and students of the College on the report at the end of March.

In its assessment of the climate at RMC, the SSAV surmised that:

...the overall climate at RMC has been influenced by a decade of resource pressures and higher priorities at the strategic level, which resulted in RMC operating in an environment that has generally placed a lower degree of priority on the College. The SSAV Team noted uncertainty among stakeholders regarding RMC’s mission and priorities, a significant level of tension between the Academic and Training Wings, N/OCdts who are cynical about their experience at RMC, and disconnects between how RMC employs more traditional learning and military training techniques and the expectations of a new generation of ‘tech-savvy’ and multi-tasking N/OCdts.¹

The report made 79 recommendations that addressed concerns in the areas of command, control, selection/employment of staff, student daily life, support at the College, and the Four Pillars programme.² To these recommendations, the CDS provided additional amplifying direction, including a mandate to immediately:

- Reinstate Kye (evening snacks);
- Revoke the Leadership Level Progression Model (LLPM) and the qualification standard;
- Reverse the cuts to the Personnel Support Program and reinstate pay levels and staffed positions; and

- Reinforce that in order to graduate, the cadets must obtain their degree (as bestowed by the College Senate), and obtain a commission (granted by Her Majesty the Queen). To obtain a commission, cadets are required to successfully complete a Bachelor's degree, continuously improve and attain a minimum of BBB in their second official language, successfully complete the Canadian Military College (CMC) physical fitness standard in their final year, and be recommended for graduation by the Commandant of CMC.

Commander Military Personnel Command (CMPC) was tasked by the CDS to implement and account for each actioned recommendation. To that end, a series of working groups with College leadership (from both military Colleges, the Royal Military College of Canada and the Royal Military College Saint-Jean) and key stakeholders Assistant Deputy Minister Infrastructure and Environment (ADM[IE]),



CFB Kingston photo

At work in the lab.



CFB Kingston photo

On parade in front of the Mackenzie building.



Graduation day at RMC.

Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS), Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS), Director General Military Careers (DGMC), and Director General Compensation and Benefits (DGCB), has resulted in significant progress in delivering on the recommendations of the report. While many of the actions taken are not evident to the cadets, among those that have had a visible impact upon them are:

- The opening of a Care Delivery Unit (CDU) in the basement of Fort Sauvé on the grounds of the College in Kingston to provide primary care health services, dental care coordination, mental health (MH) services, pharmacy, and physiotherapy to the cadets. The CDU is open extended hours in the evening and on the weekend to better enable cadets to seek immediate medical attention;
- The hiring of additional supplemental Physical Training (PT) staff in Kingston to support the delivery of supplemental PT;
- The presence of supplemental Training Wing staff at RMC – Kingston, including the addition of a colonel as Director of Cadets, and of a chief warrant officer (CWO) as the Training Wing CWO;
- The change in the walking out dress policy for all years at both Colleges to ‘smart casual’; and
- The increased restrictions on the number and types of events that Cadets are invited/tasked to support in order to protect cadet schedules at both Colleges.

Both military Colleges have collaborated on a rewrite of Cadet Wing Instructions (CADWINS) aimed at simplifying the content, with the rationale for why rules are applied and extraneous information removed. The two Colleges are also sharing training plans in order to harmonize and adopt best practices and to ensure commonality between the CMCs. Additional resourcing to address staff shortfalls in the areas of administration, logistics, information technology (IT), and student academic support, as well as to fund infrastructure repairs, has been also been sought for both Colleges.

Finally, in the area of governance, the CDS has directed that the Commander Canadian Defence Academy report directly to him on issues pertaining to the two military Colleges (RMC and RMC Saint-Jean), the Canadian Forces College (CFC) in Toronto, Ontario, and the Osside Profession of Arms Institute in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec. This will result in a split between the Canadian Defence Academy (CDA) and the Military Personnel Generation (MILPERGEN) functions. MILPERGEN will remain a direct report to Commander MILPERSCOM with responsibility for Canadian Forces Recruiting Group, Military Personnel Generation Training Group (including Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School [CFLRS] Saint-Jean), Director Personnel Generation Requirements, and Director Individual Training and Education.

Much remains to be undertaken in the longer term with respect to recommendations pertaining to the overall governance of the Colleges, the review of the Four Pillars (including a potential

refresh of the Withers Report), and major infrastructure projects (i.e. replacement of Massey Library). However, in the short term, the work undertaken to date is already making a difference in the climate of the two undergraduate Colleges for both students and staff.

Brigadier-General Virginia Tattersall, CD, has served as an Army Logistics Officer in a rich variety of line and staff positions, including operational tours in Cambodia, Syria, and Afghanistan, and a tour with the Strategic Joint Staff. She is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), the Land Forces Command and Staff College, and the Joint Command and Staff Programme at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto. Holder of a BA (Honours) in Political Science and History, as well as a Masters in Defence Studies from RMC, she is also a 2015 graduate of the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy in Washington with a Masters of Science in Resource Strategy. General Tattersall was promoted to her present rank in February 2017 and posted to Kingston as Deputy Commander Military Personnel Generation.



NOTES

1. "Special Staff Assistance Visit – Report on the Climate, Training Environment, Culture and ROTP Programme at the Royal Military College of Canada – Kingston."
2. The Four Pillars programme specifies how Naval and Officer Cadets are required to meet established standards in four key areas considered germane to service as an officer in the CAF: academics, military training, physical fitness, and bilingualism (French and English). "Special Staff Assistance Visit – Report on the Climate, Training Environment, Culture and ROTP Programme at the Royal Military College of Canada – Kingston."



CFB Kingston photo

New beginnings.



Navigating Towards a New Identity: Military to Civilian Transition

by Darryl G. Cathcart

Soldiers, sailors, and aviators will eventually remove their uniforms and transition into civilian life. This is inevitable. It is said that these warriors become civilians again, but that civilian identity comes with the attached moniker, perhaps a burden to some, of veteran. For Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) veterans, there is often an uneasiness associated with embracing this new identity. Long-established veteran organizations, such as the Royal Canadian Legion (RCL) and the Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada (ANAVETS), have witnessed a decline¹ in memberships in recent years, in spite of the fact that CAF veterans are offered a one-year free membership in those aforementioned organizations upon release. What does this shift to civilian-life mean? How does one identify as a veteran? How does a veteran rejoin civilian society in Canada and be at ease with their new identity? The change in identity from serving member to retired veteran is even more pronounced for those service members who were forced to release earlier than expected because of an injury, wound, or a chronic medical condition, whereby the opportunity to leave the military

on one's own terms was taken away. For new veterans, there is often a sense of loss and incompleteness.

There are legal definitions and colloquial understandings surrounding the word 'veteran,' but what is less definitive is how the mindset of former serving members accept the shift to becoming a civilian. Transition to civilian life occurs in, essentially, three ways; voluntarily, medically, or the result of a disciplinary or administrative issue. Most noteworthy among these exit pathways are medical releases, which have been increasing significantly, resulting in approximately 4,000 regular force members leaving the service between 2011 and 2014, as noted in a 2016 Veterans Ombudsman report.² Given the predictable release patterns associated with voluntary and disciplinary cases, veterans who find themselves departing the military because of a medical issue are often led to question their future employability. Further complicating the identity shift for medically-released service members are several factors, including health, (both physical and mental), financial stability and outlook, family, friend, and social support networks, academic, vocational, or re-training requirements, as well as the general and specific emotional needs of the veteran.

Either *one of* or a *combination of* these factors likely contributed to the joint Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) and the Department of National Defence (DND) (2011), finding that 25% of the "... SCTL [Survey on Transition to Civilian Life] population reported a difficult adjustment to civilian life."³

Veterans leave the familiarity of military life, where a unique culture exists inclusive of organizational specific language, values, ethos, traditions, and an expectation of selfless service from those with whom one serves. Discovering that an institutional decision has resulted in a determination that a service member is unfit to perform military duties, coupled with the associated employment implications, may lead medically released soldiers, and others, to be less welcoming of the term 'veteran.'

From enrolment, the Canadian Armed Forces begins to shape the identity of service members. Cultivated through an extensive general indoctrination period, followed by occupation-specific training, soldiers, sailors, and aviators spend a significant amount of time learning about the military and their chosen field. In effect, two identities are simultaneously created: A larger CAF identity, which is soon reinforced by the uniqueness of training for a military specialty. By the time retirement comes around, service members have witnessed a personal transformation where the pervasive effects of military life have influenced them significantly. In effect, the military becomes part of one's DNA.

The transformation that occurs within service members is often characterized by individual self-regulation. Initially, the military *demonstrates* then *demands* that soldiers follow a rigid set of rules and regulations. Military policies are enforced through

disciplinary methods that are well-understood by all members. Retirement marks the dissolution of institutional influence and the reliance upon individual self-regulation. This is another key aspect in the transition to becoming a veteran, particularly with respect to medically-released service members, as there is a greater onus upon the 'individual self-concept' during such a disorienting time. Often, Canadian society continues to expect more from their former serving CAF members, as introduced by multiple scholars in this area of research, who recognized this effect when stating that, "...the military presents an example of a distinct role-based subculture that differs markedly from civilian life."⁴ The end of military service is often characterized by veterans maintaining the similar, familiar self-regulatory demands of those in uniform, such as crisp haircuts and clean-shaven faces, where, conversely, those ex-service members who wear longer hair and grow a beard are often the brunt of teasing, albeit usually of a good-natured variety.

An immediate impact upon newly-released service members is that the long-established structure of regimented daily life is absent in the civilian world. From the visible and internationally-recognized identifiers represented through uniforms, to the traditional salute between ranks, through specialized qualification patches that adorn dress uniforms, all these elements underscore the hierarchy of the mission-focused CAF mindset. The absence of the structured familiarity of rank, military custom, and tradition becomes particularly apparent as veterans search for new employment. The more casual use of first names between co-workers, in comparison to the greetings associated with position or rank, the more extensive sharing of common areas, such as lunch and break rooms, and an overall less-structured environment are a few new aspects that veterans must individually address. In other



DND photo IS09-2017-0014-013 by Master Corporal Gabrielle DesRochers

words, the freedom associated with civilian life may create more conflict, anxiety, and friction for some veterans, who previously excelled in the more structured setting of the military. In a recent American study on veteran transition, one conclusion was that some veterans in new workplaces were occasionally unduly criticized because they possessed traits that saw them go above and beyond their job expectations.⁵ For medically-released veterans, feelings of awkwardness and uncertainty surrounding these new workplace interactions may come to the forefront, especially if those former service members are suffering from a non-visible injury or a chronic disease.

For veterans, leaving an operationally-focused, frequently-dynamic military to a more stable and routine lifestyle can be shrouded in a disorienting cloak. The transitory nature of military service will often find the releasing service member searching for a new place to live, a new community within which to create bonds, and often, to plant roots in one location, as opposed to moving every few years, as is the military norm. Contributing aspects in a post-military move may include the requirement to be in a more urban setting for spousal employment, specialized medical care, or to accommodate pursuit of a chosen training program. This move amplifies the isolation experienced by many veterans, who now find themselves further detached from active

CAF members and bases, where familiar and common bonds can be called upon as needed. Additionally, studies with respect to Canadian veterans recognized that the convergence of pre-and post-military life is frequently in conflict with each other,⁶ thereby adding to the turmoil of transition, and what it means to be called a veteran.

Intertwined with the notion of growing into one's new veteran identifier is the very concept of a 'successful transition' itself. What may work for one service member may not work for another.



DND photo HS06-0956-287 by Leading Seaman Dan Bard



Royal Canadian Legion photo DSC_7471

Royal Canadian Legion Riders Launch.

Recently, different studies discovered a wide range in the number of those veterans who reported that they experienced a difficult transition, actually reaching a high of almost 38%,⁷ compared to the 25% of difficult transitions assessed by the aforementioned Veterans Affairs Canada study.⁸ Furthermore, some researchers have postulated that there is "...no consistent measurable definition of successful military transition."⁹ Considering that the annual number of CAF releases is around 5,000 service members, this would suggest that up to 1,900 retirees may expect to have a difficult transition for several reasons, resulting in varying levels of post-military success. Each retiring service member must come to terms with what the notion of veteran means to him or her, and how this new identity will be embraced. More Canadian specific research is warranted with respect to veteran identity, and particularly, the impact of transition upon medically-released service members. Unlike other professions, where retirees are referred to as a former-schoolteacher, police officer, or doctor, a military service member is called a veteran regardless of what he or she did in uniform. Whether a plumber, a pilot, or a 'tank driver,' the

term of veteran is equally and proudly assigned to all, but many are unsure of and/or reluctant to embrace the implications that accompany this new categorization.

Darryl Cathcart enrolled in the Canadian Army as a Private soldier in the Royal Canadian Regiment, commissioned from the ranks, and retired as a senior officer. He is currently a Master of Education student at Queen's University, with an interest in adult education and leadership. Darryl is conducting research on the individual decision-making process surrounding a mandatory mid-life career change. During his army service, Darryl deployed to the Balkans twice, to Kosovo, and to Afghanistan. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College (with distinction), the United States Marine Corps Expeditionary Warfare School, and the Joint Command and Staff Programme at the Canadian Forces College.



Royal Canadian Legion Soldier On Afghanistan relay team.

NOTES

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A work party from HMCS *St. John's* clears fallen trees and other debris from roads during Operation *Renaissance* as part of the relief efforts taking place on the island of Dominica following the destruction left by Hurricane *Maria*, 27 September 2017.

Dialogue on Defence

by Martin Shadwick

In today's unsettled and troubling international geo-strategic environment—one shaped by a partial reawakening of Cold War-like dynamics, an erosion of diplomacy and a surfeit of brinkmanship, tensions between Russia and NATO, security and other stress points in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region, the continuing scourge of global terrorism, nuclear proliferation (i.e., North Korea), the uncertainties and tensions inherent in Trumpian approaches to American and global peace and security, and a host of other issues and dilemmas—Canada arguably confronts its greatest foreign, defence, and international security policy challenges since the end of the Second World War. That will necessitate grappling with the future of continental defence—including collaboration with the United States on improvements in surveillance and control, and the renewal of the aging North Warning System and, potentially, Canadian involvement in ballistic missile defence—as well as with the future Canadian roles in NATO, international peace support operations (under UN or other auspices), multilateral counter-terrorism and other global peace and security

endeavours. Increasingly, Ottawa will also need to grapple with the ramifications of environmental change for Canada's armed forces (including the contentious issue of military involvement in domestic and global disaster relief operations and the emergency evacuations of Canadian nationals). On the procurement and force structure fronts, the 'operationalization' of the Trudeau government's 2017 defence policy statement will require difficult and costly decisions on the *interim* and *definitive* fighter aircraft projects (with the Bombardier-Boeing imbroglio and the subsequent Bombardier-Airbus link-up as unorthodox sidebars), the virtual rebuilding of the Royal Canadian Navy, and the re-equipping of Canada's regular and reserve land forces.

Issues of this gravity and cost demand thorough, thoughtful, and informed discussion and debate. Unfortunately, as the *Vimy Report* has reminded us, "public discussion of international security affairs" in Canada "is poorly informed. This has led to weak decision-making by governments and produced inferior outcomes for Canadians." *Reversing*—or, more realistically, *blunting*—this

lamentable national trait in a way that meaningfully engages Canadians, their media, and their parliamentarians will require an almost Herculean effort by a diverse and eclectic range of actors. In the absence of such a campaign, however, Canada will be doomed to a 21st Century replay of the unbalanced, unduly partisan, and often breathtakingly ill-informed national ‘debates’ that have too often dogged defence and international security policy issues in Canada, including—to cite but one period of time—the debates associated with North American Air Defence Modernization (NAADM), the proposed acquisition of the EH101 maritime helicopter and nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), and the Canadian response to the American invitation to participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in the mid-1980s and early-1990s.

A useful cautionary tale, the muddled and highly politicized debate over North American Air Defence Modernization and alleged links to the contentious Strategic Defense Initiative (itself the subject of a less than impressive discourse) generated an abundance of heat, but distressingly little light. In his *Globe and Mail* column of 21 March 1985, Jeffrey Simpson argued that “foolish and irresponsible attacks by opposition MPs...against...[NAADM’s] North Warning System may have confused the gullible. The Liberals had been negotiating a badly needed modernization of the DEW Line. The Conservatives, to their credit, clinched the

deal with a package that asserts rather than diminishes, Canadian sovereignty.” The opposition “pretends that somehow the North Warning System is linked to [the] Strategic [Defense] Initiative. No one has been more sharply critical of SDI than your faithful observer...but no link exists between North Warning and SDI.” A significant contributing factor to the flawed NAADM debate was the Canadian media’s almost-total neglect of air defence modernization in the years leading up to the inking of the NAADM accord in March 1985. Political excesses and weaknesses in media coverage also played a role in the distressingly unbalanced and cliché-ridden debate over the Mulroney government’s proposed acquisition of the EH101 maritime helicopter (which was routinely but misleadingly characterized by some critics as a “Cadillac,” a “Cold War ASW helicopter,” or an “attack helicopter”). This is not to suggest that the Chrétien government necessarily erred in its 1993 decision to terminate the acquisition of the helicopter, or to fault the media for posing tough questions about the EH101, but some reportage must be faulted for its failure to pose the same tough questions of the would-be alternatives to the EH101. Similarly, the Mulroney government’s 1987 pledge to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines—unceremoniously jettisoned less than two years later—may or may not have been strategically and/or financially sound, but Canada was undeniably ill-served by yet another superficial and ill-informed debate.



Bombardier C-Series aircraft artist conception.



AugustaWestland EH-101 medium-lift helicopter.

In retrospect, it is *unfortunate* and in certain respects *surprising* that the arrival of some new or reinvigorated actors—and their associated publications, conferences, and expertise—did not more noticeably elevate the quality of Canadian defence and international security policy discourse between the mid-1980s and early-1990s. Relevant actors included, but were not confined to, the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies (CISS), the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS), the Conference of Defence Associations (CDA), the Canadian Centre for Arms Control and Disarmament (CCACD), the Canadian Institute of International Affairs (much older than many of the other NGOs, and admittedly, not defence-centric in mandate, but nevertheless valuable), a higher-profile *Canadian Defence Quarterly* (the public-private professional journal of the Canadian Forces) and, most notably, the dozen or so university research centres funded to a significant degree by DND's Military and Strategic Studies (MSS) programme (later renamed the Security and Defence Forum).

The Business Council on National Issues (since 2001, the Business Council of Canada) also generated some useful defence and defence-industrial studies during the relevant timeframe (although some critics not surprisingly saw these as self-serving). Specialist business coverage of defence and defence-industrial issues also expanded during the period. Notable examples included the *Financial Post* and other Maclean-Hunter publications including *Aerospace Canada* (and its successors) and *The Wednesday Report* (a weekly newsletter aimed at analysts and senior decision-makers

in government, the armed forces and industry). On a very different media front, the appearance of CBC Newsworld in mid-1989 added yet another vehicle for discussing defence issues. International coverage of Canadian defence also expanded, most notably via the stellar reporting of Sharon Hobson in *Jane's Defence Weekly*. The 1980s and the early-1990s also witnessed comparatively good transparency in defence decision-making, as well as comparatively good media and academic access to senior civilian, military, and industry decision-makers. Relevant parliamentary committees enjoyed a higher profile as well.

One can, of course, posit that the debate over such issues as NAADM, SDI, SSN, and EH101 would have been even less well informed and less edifying in the absence of the aforementioned actors. It also no less true for being obvious that most Canadians—certainly the general public but also significant elements of the defence-attentive public—would simply not have seen or followed (or cared about) the substantial outputs from defence-relevant non-government organizations, the MSS centres, or specialist defence and defence-industrial publications. More tellingly, given the blame that some pundits placed upon over-zealous, ill-informed politicians, and less-than-adequately-informed journalists, much of that expanded output was apparently also missed or ignored by politicians and journalists. Did that reflect failures on the part of politicians and journalists, insufficiently vigorous outreach by non-governmental organizations, research centres and other actors, or a range of other—perhaps quintessentially Canadian—factors and forces? Is there any



DND photo BNS2-2017-0003-044 by Master Corporal Louis Brunet

Canadian nationals stranded in the Caribbean following Hurricane *Irma* board an RCAF CC-177 *Globemaster III* departing Providenciales Airport in the Turks and Caicos, as part of Operation *Renaissance*, 14 September 2017.

possibility that Canadians might witness and participate in higher quality defence discussion and debate in 2018 and beyond?

In this regard, it is important to note that some of the familiar actors of the mid-1980s and early-1990s—including the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, and the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security—no longer exist. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs morphed into the more robust Canadian International Council in 2007. In 2008, the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies folded its operations into the CIC as, in effect, the Strategic Studies Working Group (SSWG). A partnership between the CIC and the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute (now the

Canadian Global Affairs Institute), the SSWG sought to “ensure that the then new CIC would not lose sight of defence and security issues.” There is debate as to how effectively that goal has been realized. DND’s Security and Defence Forum, in its traditional guise, was short-sightedly axed late in the Harper era, ostensibly as an economy measure, but political, bureaucratic, and military annoyance over policy and other criticism from SDF-funded university research centres, and the perception that SDF centres were mere “talking shops” were probably more telling. The resulting closure or downsizing of many SDF centres—and the repositioning of others to focus upon non-defence issues—silenced some important voices with respect to Canadian defence. The Trudeau Liberals, to their credit, have pledged to bolster academic outreach



With HMCS *Ottawa* and her crew in the background, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Defence Minister Harjit S. Sajjan take part in a press conference at CFB Esquimalt, 2 March 2017.

(i.e., \$4.5 million per year for a “revamped and expanded defence engagement program,” including collaborative networks of experts, a new scholarship program, and an “expansion of the existing expert briefing series and engagement grant program”) although the full scope of this plan remains to be publicly revealed. Much lower profile, but still a noteworthy loss to informed discussion, was the recent closure of the online *Canadian-American Strategic Review*—a veritable fount of useful information on Canadian defence policy, procurement, and defence technology.

On an infinitely more positive note, the Canadian Global Affairs Institute (CGAI)—with its extensive and diverse array of conferences, policy papers, policy updates, a quarterly *Dispatch* and electronic bulletins—can rightly claim to be “Canada’s most credible source of expertise on global affairs,” including defence, diplomacy, trade and development. It is indispensable to thoughtful analysis, discussion, and debate on Canadian defence policy and related themes. A more recent undertaking, but one with considerable potential, is the online *Vimy Report*. The mission of the *Vimy Report* “is to raise the quality of national debate on security and defence issues which matter to Canadians. To do so, it must liberate discussion from the preserve of government, political

partisans, and special interests; broaden the parameters of what is considered acceptable opinion; and draw attention to the information and views of professionals who have worked in the field.” Other vehicles for discussion and debate include the repositioned NATO Association of Canada (ex-Atlantic Council of Canada), the Conference of Defence Associations/Conference of Defence Associations Institute (CDA/CDAI) and—one hopes increasingly, given the usefulness of its recent survey of Canadian defence analysts regarding the interim fighter project—the Macdonald-Laurier Institute. Another resource, one now being tapped with increasing regularity, is the growing cadre of retired Canadian officers holding advanced degrees in war studies, international relations, political science, and related fields. With very few exceptions, this resource simply did not exist in previous decades. Particular note should also be taken of the dramatically-expanded corps of academics at the Canadian Forces College. Multiple parliamentary committees clearly remain relevant to the broader discussion of Canadian defence policy, although, with some exceptions—such as recent official testimony regarding ballistic missile defence—it would appear, at least circumstantially, that committee proceedings and reports currently draw less media and public attention than in the 1980s and early-1990s.



DND photo HS01-2017-0940-545 by Master Corporal Chris Ringius

A work party and a CH-124 *Sea King* helicopter from HMCS *St. John's* arrive on the island of Dominica during Operation *Renaissance*, a relief mission in the Caribbean following the destruction caused by Hurricane *Maria*, 27 September 2017.

On other fronts, *Canadian Defence Quarterly* ceased publishing in 1999—some years after the cessation of DND funding—but its mantle has been more than effectively passed to *Canadian Military Journal* (from 2000, the in-house professional journal of the Canadian Armed Forces and the Department of National Defence), and the three service-specific professional journals, two in-house (army, air force) and one private-public (navy). Maclean-Hunter's trade publications, such as *Aerospace Canada* and *The Wednesday Report* have long since disappeared, as indeed has Maclean-Hunter, although *The Wednesday Report* survived in private hands into the 1990s. A number of relevant multi-purpose and/or trade journals, including *Esprit de Corps*, launched in 1988, are still extant. The Canadian profile in foreign defence journals, including *Jane's Defence Weekly*, has, however, diminished dramatically in recent years. The CBC, CTV, Postmedia (i.e., *National Post*, *Ottawa Citizen*) and the Canadian Press have some most able journalists assigned to defence, but the staying power of this contribution to defence discussion and debate remains uncertain, given the broader crisis in Canadian journalism occasioned by the rise of internet news platforms and other powerful forces. Moreover, the reduced transparency, access to decision-makers, and proclivity to secrecy displayed by some recent Canadian governments have posed challenges for journalists, pundits, and academics alike.

Nonetheless, in the final analysis, the degree to which one can elevate the quality of the national discussion and debate on

security and defence is not simply a function of the vehicles or fora—be they non-governmental organizations, university think tanks, the general media, professional journals, online blogs or parliamentary committees—at our disposal. To a very large degree, public interest (or apathy) in defence is a function of the collective concern over the state of the international security environment and Canada's place and role, or *potential* place and role, in that environment. If Canadians believe, for any number of reasons, that they live in an increasingly dangerous world, they are more likely to display interest in or concern with respect to Canadian foreign, defence, and international security policy. Moreover, few of the challenges and issues confronting Canada—be they the rebuilding of the armed forces, Canada's future roles in ballistic missile defence (particularly given strains in the American-North Korean 'relationship'), NATO, peace support operations and counter-terrorism—are not of the short-term, quick-fix variety. They are deserving of the sustained attention of Canadians, and a more thoughtful, well-informed and constructive discussion and debate.

Martin Shadwick has taught Canadian defence policy at York University in Toronto for many years. He is a former editor of *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, and he is the resident *Defence Commentator* for the *Canadian Military Journal*.



NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium.

ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy Stock Photo/CPNCR

Geopolitics

by Bill Bentley

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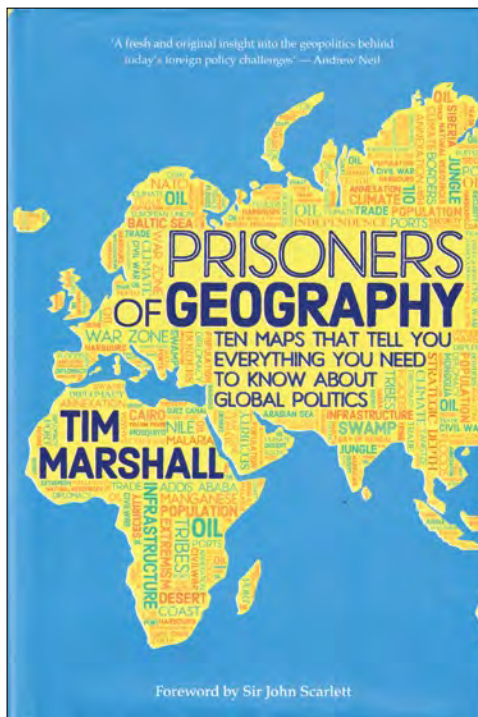
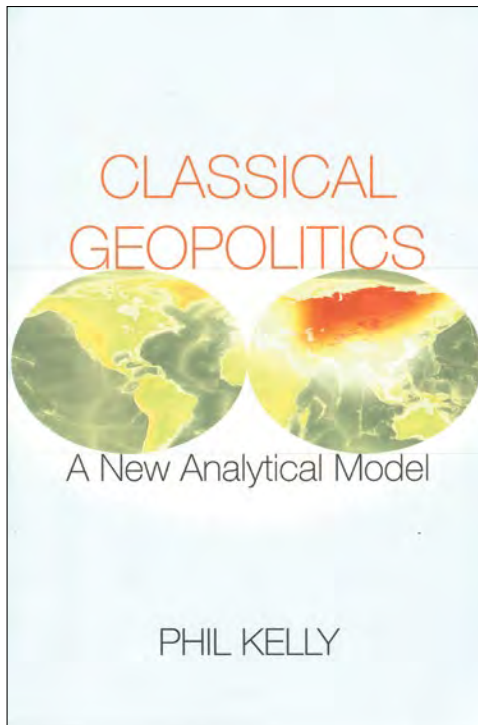
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Tim Marshall, *Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics* (London: Elliott and Thompson, 2015)

Admiral James Stavridis, USN (Ret.), *Sea Power: The History and Geopolitics of the World's Oceans* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017)

Geopolitics as a scholarly discipline, distinct from other international relations models and theories, can trace two paths of origin, both arising around the beginning of the 20th Century. The first, based upon the work of two Germans, Friedrich Ratzel and Rudolf Kjellen, reflected a Germanic interest in putative scientific laws that applied to a state's survival in a competitive international system. This approach, inevitably, led to the Nazis' embracing the legitimacy of taking "living space" (*lebensraum*) from weaker states to maximize the power and growth of their state. The second path, pioneered by Admiral Alfred Mahan (American), Halford Mackinder (British), and Nicholas Spykman (Dutch-American) depicted geographic placement of states and regions as *conditioning*, but not necessarily *dictating* foreign affairs action. By the end of the Second World War, the German approach was completely discredited and the Anglo-American one largely overshadowed by Realist, and subsequently, Neo-Realist theories in International Relations theory (IR).

Phil Kelly is a professor of political science at Emporia State University. In *Classical Geopolitics*, he intends to refurbish the standing of the discipline of geopolitics. His purpose is to construct a model to demonstrate the utility of geopolitics as a viable IR theory. After reviewing the work of several post-Second World



War geopolitical theorists, he provides what he describes as a "consensus" definition: "Geopolitics is the study of the impact or influence of certain geographic features, positions and the location of regions, states and resources, plus topography, climate, distance, states' size and shape, demography and certain cultural aspects upon states' foreign policies and actions as an aid to statecraft." Kelly discusses 60 concepts associated with his geopolitical model. Some of these are quite familiar to most readers, including choke points, buffer states, and sea lanes of communication. Others are less so, such as action spaces, checkerboards, fluvial laws, and shatterbelts. Taken together, however, they constitute a reasonably compelling theoretical framework to generate various IR hypotheses. *Classical Geopolitics* is a substantive, abstract treatment of the subject and its relationship to Realist theory in IR. It is of considerable value for specialists, but less relevant for students and practitioners of grand strategy, military strategy, and foreign policy, more interested in the practical manifestations of the underlying theory.

The other three books by Kaplan, Marshall, and Stavridis respectively, fit comfortably into Kelly's framework, but *specifically* address the existing, contemporary world. Robert Kaplan and Tim Marshall are both seasoned journalists; the former, American, and the latter, British. Kaplan is better known, and is the author of 13 other books, two of which stand out particularly: *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, and *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*. Admiral James Stavridis, USN (Ret.) is a four-star admiral with extensive operational experience, including as Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) in NATO. He is the only naval officer to ever hold that post. He also has a Ph.D and is currently the Dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

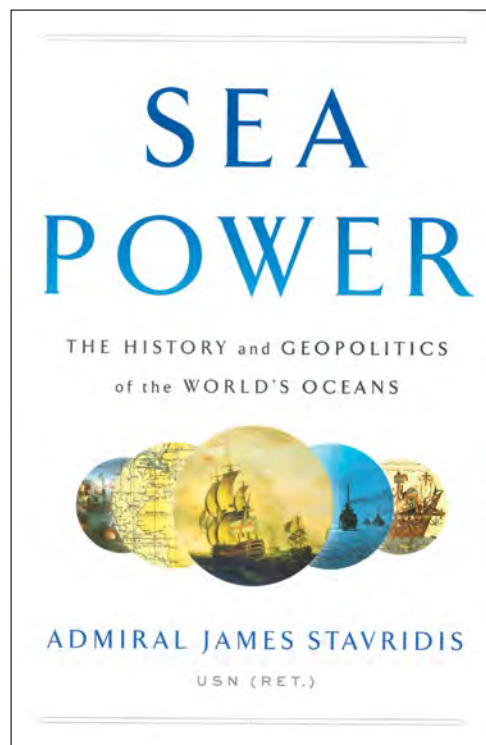
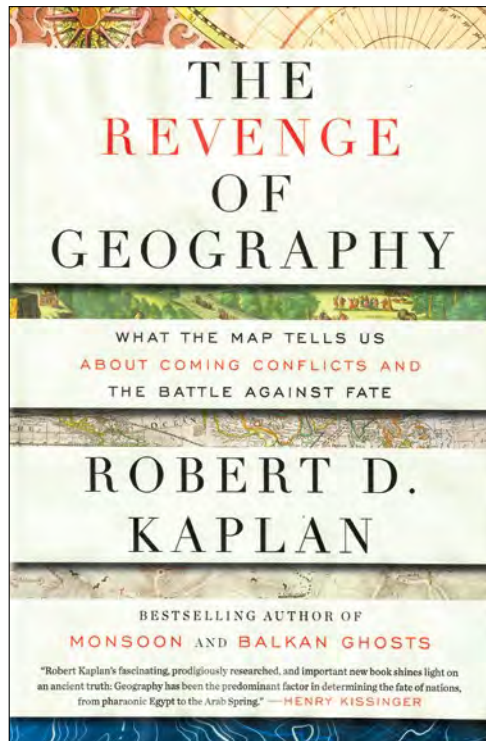
Tim Marshall's book is certainly the most straightforward of the three, and the 10 maps he chooses to explain his perspective on the world are not surprising. He starts with Russia, China, and the USA, and then addresses compound maps of Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India and Pakistan, Korea and Japan, Latin America, before closing with the Arctic. Marshall helpfully

reminds us that a variety of factors that have driven globalization, such as the internet, air travel, space, and the global flow of capital have all bent the iron rules of geography. In the final analysis, however, geography and the history of how nations have established themselves within that geography remains crucial to our understanding of the world today and our future. All the other authors reviewed here would agree wholeheartedly with that view.

Robert Kaplan structures his book quite differently than Marshall because he is more focussed, as he writes, "...on what the map tells us about coming conflicts." His book is divided into three parts. Part 1 reviews the geopolitical literature, especially the classic theories of Mackinder, Spykman, and Mahan. Mackinder argued that whoever controls the *Heartland*, that is, Eurasia, could control the world. Spykman counters by arguing that it is, in fact, control of the *Rimland* surrounding Eurasia that would prevail. By integrating Mahan's thesis of command of the sea into his argument, Spykman was confident that the US could maintain global dominance.

In Part 2, Kaplan turns to the geopolitical regions of most concern to him. These are Russia, China, India, Iran, and Turkey. Written in 2012, Korea did not loom nearly as large as a potential threat as it does in 2017, and it is not covered in any depth. The Arctic also was apparently not perceived as a source of imminent conflict, and Kaplan makes no mention of this region. Significantly, Admiral Stavridis in his book, published in 2017, pays close attention to both regions.

In Part 3 (America's Destiny), *The Revenge of Geography* takes a surprising turn and concludes with a chapter entitled "Braudel, Mexico and Grand Strategy." In direct opposition to any early call for the building of a "Wall," Kaplan asserts that fixing Mexico is more important than fixing Afghanistan and Iraq. He sums up his overarching thesis by stating baldly that the USA must be a balancing power in Eurasia, and a unifying power in North America. Specifically, Mexico must play a central function in any grand strategy the USA decides upon.



Admiral Stavridis's book is a topical, stimulating read by a naval officer of superior intellect and erudition. A thorough-going Mahanian, the author takes us through all the oceans and major seas – Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic, Mediterranean, South China, and the Caribbean. As a seagoing naval officer all his adult life, he unobtrusively weaves personal anecdotes of his experiences in every ocean and sea, from the rank of midshipman at the Naval Academy (Annapolis), to his 'four-star' command of Southern Command. It is clear that *Sea Power* is clearly something of a 'labour of love' for Stavridis, reflecting his love for the sea, the USN, his country, and, indeed, his concern for all of humanity inhabiting this earth.

Touching upon most of the major past sea battles and voyages of exploration, Stavridis is more concerned with assessing the potential opportunities and threats posed in and around the oceans for contemporary policy makers and geo-strategists, both military and civilian. These assessments are always balanced and never bellicose or militaristic. At all times, he remains committed to multilateralism and being a supporter of traditional allies. The admiral's reflections with respect to the Indian Ocean are especially noteworthy, if only because the region tends to be overshadowed by events in the Pacific, Atlantic, and Mediterranean. Of course, as he reminds us, the Indian Ocean region includes the Arabian Gulf and its critical link to the Middle East. In the final analysis, Stavridis is convinced that the 21st Century will be more about the Indian Ocean than of the other three. "...and the sooner we fully realize that in the United States, the better."

Of particular interest for Canada is the admiral's discussion of the Arctic region. He is acutely aware of the growing importance of this geopolitical entity – economically, environmentally, and in security terms. As a matter of fact, of the nine chapters in the book, the one on the Arctic is the longest. Russia, naturally, looms large in his analysis; lamentably, Canada does not! Characteristically, he stresses the need for cooperation among all members of the Arctic Council, Permanent members, as well as those with Observer status.

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Nonetheless, he does conclude that the time may be approaching when the US will need to assign a numbered fleet (the 9th) to the Arctic region.

Throughout, the Admiral's treatment of the geopolitics of the world's oceans is not merely descriptive. He is not averse to prescription, and he ends each chapter with carefully considered holistic policies and strategies for dealing with all challenges and opportunities.

There are, to be sure, a number of books and authors dealing with the subject of geopolitics published over the last few decades. Harold and Margaret Sprout and Henry Kissinger come immediately to mind. More recently, Eliot Cohen's book *The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force* deals with his subject from a largely geopolitical perspective. However, the four books reviewed here provide an excellent basis for understanding the subject and pursuing it through other sources. They are enough to convince readers that you do not have to be a geographical determinist to realize that geography is vitally important. The more we remain preoccupied with current events, the more that individuals and their choices matter; but the more we look out over the span of the centuries, the more that geography plays a role.

Bill Bentley, MSM, CD, Ph.D., passed away suddenly earlier this autumn. A great contributor over the years to the *Journal* and a true champion of professional development, Bill was, until his death, the Senior Staff Officer Professional Concepts at the Canadian Defence Academy Headquarters in Kingston, Ontario.



Bill Bentley being Bill Bentley.

Courtesy of a DND colleague

Vimy: The Battle and the Legend

by **Tim Cook**

Toronto: Random House, 2017

512 pages, \$33.00

ISBN: 978-0735233164

Reviewed by **Steven Bright**

“Winning Vimy and Remembering Its Meaning”

In a secret report for Army Headquarters written many years after the First World War, Canadian military historian Major D. J. Goodspeed said that time distorts memory. More specifically, he wrote that “...the force exerted by the past upon the present weakens in direct proportion to its remoteness: other considerations intervene; cross-currents of influence arise; and the significances of the past to any individual occurrence is soon in doubt.”¹

Vimy: The Battle and the Legend, the latest book by Tim Cook, one of Canada’s best (and most prolific) military historians, stands that time-impact correlation on its head.

In Cook’s view, Vimy is as important today as it was one hundred years ago when the Canadian Expeditionary Force, with all four of its divisions fighting together for the first time, took control of a ridge where tens of thousands of French and British soldiers had fallen earlier.

This has not always been the case.

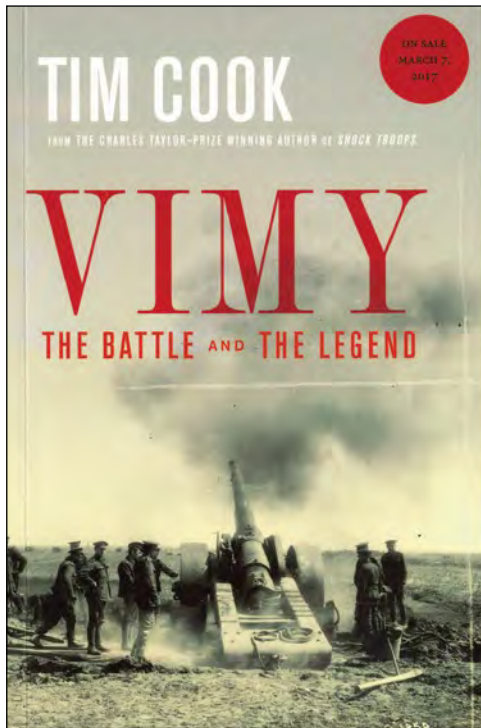
Indeed, much of Cook’s fascinating book navigates the various waves on which the memory and meaning of Vimy have ridden over the years, subject as they have been to the force and flow of economic conditions and political expediency, among other factors.

In so doing, Cook asks why Vimy sits head and shoulders above the CEF’s other victories in the First World War and the war that followed a mere 21 years later. Why Vimy and not Juno Beach?

Cook argues that there are at least two reasons why Vimy is a marquee moment in our history.

First, the intrinsic achievements of the Battle of Vimy Ridge stand out for what the CEF accomplished in the bloody and muddy fighting that saw 2,967 Canadian men die between 9 April and 10 April 1917.

The broad contours of that battle are well known to most readers. This is thanks in part to Cook’s own previous works, such as “*At the Sharp End*,” and “*Shock Troops*,” his award-winning two-volume history of the First World War, along with a growing array of new books by a range of young Canadian historians. [Has the Great War ever been so popular among young historians? This is great.]



Cook’s description of the Vimy fighting matches the action it describes. The training, raids, lethal explosions, and physical and mental strains experienced by Canadians trying to hit their objectives – the Black, Red, Blue, and Brown lines – all leap off the page in Cook’s vivid account. Learning that the 1st Division – which rushed across 4,000 metres and lost about 2,500 men – the equivalent of one fallen man per 1.5 metres, the average height of a soldier – puts the high costs of Vimy into sharp relief.

If there is a quibble with this treatment, it is in Cook’s paucity with first-hand accounts from the 22nd Battalion, the only French-speaking battalion in the battle. However, Cook does write later in the book that the 22nd “...was all but ignored in French Canada, though several thousand French Canadians had died in service of King and country.”

The meaning of the memory of Vimy Ridge are less well known than the battle, and this is where Cook’s book really shines.

In Cook’s view, Vimy’s resilience and importance stem from its power being “...derived from a decades-long process of distilling the Great War into a single event, and then representing that event through an alchemy of memory, loss, and national pride.”

The energetic writing of Pierre Berton certainly helped keep Vimy alive in the public conscience. As Cook writes, Berton’s 1986 book about the battle brought “...to the fore the many strands of memory that celebrated Vimy.”

Cook achieves the same thing.

Crisply written, with footnotes for specialists and generalists alike, his highly readable book illustrates why Vimy has resonated with so many people over the decades. There is no doubt that many Canadians who went to Vimy for centenary celebrations earlier this year would have read Cook’s account of the 1936 Vimy pilgrimage for the official unveiling of the memorial, during which “...more than 6,000 veterans from all parts of Canada had to be moved across an ocean.”

BOOK REVIEWS

In 1936, as in 2017, countless Canadians shared a human experience that centred upon Vimy. Put another way, as Cook writes, “Vimy did not make the nation. It was the nation that made Vimy.”

The memorial to which these pilgrims traveled plays a central role in Cook’s book. And his discussion of Walter Allward’s struggles as an artist creating a memorial to last through the ages sheds light on some very practical matters when it came to marking the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Who was to be memorialized, for instance? And how?

In “Vimy,” we read that it took four years “and much expertise” to sandblast the inscribed names of 11,285 Canadians who died in France with no known grave across the memorial “... to an even depth for each name, even with the use of specially constructed rubber templates.”

Small but important insights like this show that readers are in the hands of someone extremely well versed in his topic, yet not in a rush to tell readers everything at once. Cook’s pacing and tone invite readers to take a pause themselves to think about Vimy – very fitting, given how Allward’s memorial does the very same thing.

Can we reach through that memorial to actually touch the fallen? Of course not.

But as Cook tells us throughout his important and timely work, we *can* – and *should* – reach beyond simple clichés of nation building in learning what the soldiers did that day, in understanding what it meant to those who lost family members, and in discussing what sacrifice and service mean in the context of current-day turmoil.

The lessons and meaning of Vimy, thanks in large part to Tim Cook, are as relevant today as ever. There is no doubt that Vimy’s significance has been amplified, and not lost, with the passing of time.

Steven Bright is a civilian graduate of RMC’s War Studies programme. He is a freelance writer living in Oakville, Ontario.

NOTE

1. D.J. Goodspeed, “The Origins of the First World War,” Report #99, Historical Section, Army Headquarters, no date given, Directorate of History and Heritage website, www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca.

The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Great War

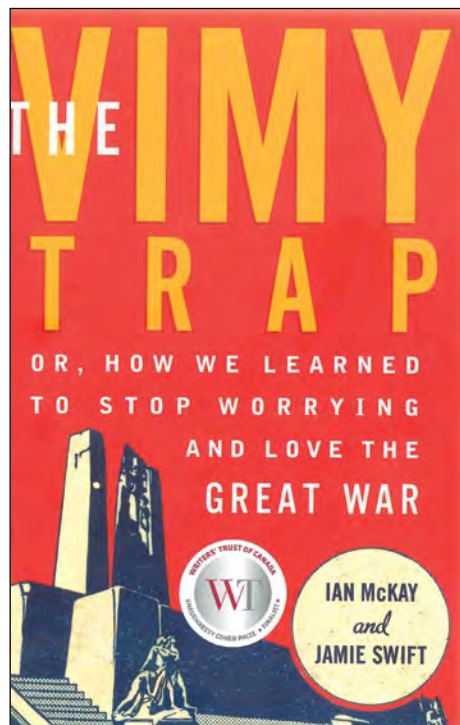
by Ian McKay and Jamie Swift

Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016

372 pages, \$22.93.

Reviewed by Michael Peterson

The *Vimy Trap* is an extended critique of the place of the 1917 battle of Vimy Ridge in Canadian identity. McKay, an academic, and Swift, a journalist, have spent their careers examining Canadian history and institutions from a left-wing perspective. As their book’s snarky title suggests, they reject the idea that Vimy was a foundational moment when a true Canadian identity and nation were born. This provocative book is intended for a general audience, and is clearly intended to be iconoclastic.



McKay and Swift are at their best when describing the process by which Vimy Ridge became an iconic battle for Canada. While tactically successful, Vimy Ridge did not have a strategic result. In fact, Vimy was the sole bright spot in the failed Anglo-French Arras offensive of April 1917. Other Canadian actions, such as the Hundred Days of 1918, had far more effect upon the outcome of the war. However, Vimy was the first time that the Canadian Corps had fought together, (albeit with significant British support), a point of pride for the Corps’ members.

Immediately after the war, there was disagreement as to whether Vimy should be selected over other Canadian battlefields (Hill 62 in the Ypres Salient was a candidate) to be the site of a national memorial. By 1922, Vimy had been selected, in part because of the scenic view, and the contract for the design of a monument was awarded to Walter Allward. The driving force for the Vimy memorial came from William Mackenzie King, who first became Prime Minister in 1921. As McKay and Swift note, King was a pacifist, and saw the

BOOK REVIEWS

Vimy monument as a way to condemn the “futility of war” while acknowledging the coming together of all Canadians in a great common cause. Allward, the designer, wanted the Vimy monument to be a “sermon” for peace.

McKay and Swift’s main thesis is that this ideal of a monument to peace was hijacked by a militaristic, nationalistic view of Canadian history that ignored the horrors of the First World War. The authors describe this view as “Vimyism,” meaning a glorification and simplification of war, a desire to see Canada as always being on the side of right, and to see the battle of Vimy Ridge as the birth of a nation that was, in fact, far from unified. This idea of “Vimyism,” which becomes a long screed against militarism, is where McKay and Swift overplay their hand while pointing at some important truths.

McKay and Swift are right to remind us that Canada had no common or romanticised understanding of war in the decades after 1918. There was a sizeable peace movement, fueled by trade unions, unemployment, social issues, pacifist clergy, and anti-war soldier writers such as Charles Yale Harrison, whose novel *Generals Die in Bed* (1928) is often hailed as the Canadian version of Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front*. However, in the late-1930s, Canadian pacifism largely gave way to a grudging belief that a war against Nazi Germany was necessary. “Vimyism,” claim the authors, developed in the last fifty years as a whitewashed version of Canada’s military history, so that Vimy is portrayed by everyone from Pierre Berton to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as a glorification of Canada’s military history and a celebration of a common Canadian resolve to fight tyranny and win.

In a rambling second half, the authors argue that for Vimyism to succeed as the myth of Canada’s birth in fire, much has to be forgotten, from the horrors of war as described by Harrison, to French Canada’s alienation from the war, the segregation of black Canadian soldiers in construction units, and the poor treatment of indigenous soldiers who did not receive proper pensions. Vimyism for Swift and McKay also means forgetting the injustice of shooting of twenty-two Canadian soldiers, many of them young and psychologically wounded, for cowardice. From the sales of war toys in the gift shop of the Canadian War Museum, to Vimy tours for school children, the authors look for evidence of Vimyism as a false but “uplifting and sacred story of [Canadian] origins” that

betrays the true horror of war. To prosecute their case, McKay and Swift often use “what about” arguments, like supposedly noble Canadian soldiers executing prisoners or employing poison gas, or snide dismissals, such as the comment that military intelligence and martial music are contradictions in terms. All these arguments are intended to expose Vimyism as a lie, although one can ask whether it is fair to judge the Canada of 1917 by today’s standards.

It is hard to imagine any members of the Canadian Armed Force embracing *The Vimy Trap*, although I suspect that this would not bother McKay and Swift, who seem to see militaries as part of the problem. Contrary to McKay and Swift, it is possible to see Vimy in a way that is free of myth and romanticism, while still recognizing it as an important battle. Indeed, that was how its participants saw it. Sergeant Percy Wilmot of Nova Scotia, who died of wounds after the battle, wrote: “Canada may well be proud of [our] achievement.”¹

The Vimy Trap is nevertheless useful as an opportunity to reflect upon how the CAF uses military history to perpetuate its values. Young NCMs are frequently taken on tours of Vimy Ridge and other First World War battlefields. In my experience, when our members see cemeteries full of Canadians as young people, or even younger than themselves, they are not moved to militaristic zeal. In fact, quite the reverse. Older members with combat experience immediately connect the war dead with their own friends and comrades lost or wounded in Afghanistan. Militarism for the CAF is not the problem. Perhaps for our leadership, the challenge is to use places like Vimy Ridge honestly, as historical moments, stripped of myth and full of pain and horror, yet still capable of teaching the military ethos of courage, self-sacrifice, tactical skill, and aggressiveness.

Major (Padre) Michael Peterson, Ph.D., is the *Course Research and Resource Development Officer at the Canadian Forces Chaplain School and Centre, at CFB Borden.*

NOTE

1. Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War, 1917-18* (Toronto: Viking, 2008), p. 147.