Archived Content

Information identified as archived on the Web is for reference, research or record-keeping purposes. It has not been altered or updated after the date of archiving. Web pages that are archived on the Web are not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards.

As per the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, you can request alternate formats on the "Contact Us" page.

Information archivée dans le Web

Information archivée dans le Web à des fins de consultation, de recherche ou de tenue de documents. Cette dernière n'a aucunement été modifiée ni mise à jour depuis sa date de mise en archive. Les pages archivées dans le Web ne sont pas assujetties aux normes qui s'appliquent aux sites Web du gouvernement du Canada.

Conformément à la Politique de communication du gouvernement du Canada, vous pouvez demander de recevoir cette information dans tout autre format de rechange à la page « Contactez-nous ».

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES
NSSC 5 / CESN 5

Not Battle Ready: Surviving Cultural Change and Recapturing the Warrior Ethic in Canada's Armed Forces

By /par Captain(N) Tyrone H.W. Pile

This paper was written by a student attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.

La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale.

Whatever else they do, the Canadian Forces will be held responsible for the courage, skill and organization necessary to perform their ultimate military function[1].

Desmond Morton

Introduction

In a modern democracy, the state of relations between the military and society is often viewed in terms of the degree of difference between their respective moral and cultural values. The greater the difference, the greater the danger of the state losing control and direction of the nation's greatest capacity for violence, thereby allowing the military to threaten democracy itself. The lesser the difference, the greater the danger of eliminating the moral and cultural values that

distinguish military forces from society and enable them to kill other human beings or to sacrifice their own lives for their nation. In other words, a military that is less effective in war fighting or combat. A sense of balance between these two extremes is normally maintained by a constant tension between military and civilian cultures as they adapt to internal and external influences, but it is primarily their adaptation to the latter.

In the United States, where the military performs a leading role in the politics of the state, cultural and moral civilian-military differences tend to be greater and are reflected in the tension between government and its control and direction of a large, powerful and effective armed forces. In Canada, the military does not normally perform a leading role in political or public affairs. It is not surprising, therefore, that the tension in Canada is quite the opposite – a government occasionally brought to task to explain an armed forces that is significantly less powerful, less effective and less visible. This tension is most evident within the military itself, but its means to express, correct or improve the situation are limited.

The purpose of this paper is not to argue for a more effective and powerful military in Canada, but to expose a potentially dangerous outcome from the ever-decreasing gap between civilian and military culture. In essence, the fundamental values of the profession of arms in Canada – its military ethos, "on which the moral component of fighting power depends"[2] – have been gradually eroded by cultural change since the end of the Second World War and are in danger of being destroyed. Whereas militaries in the United States and United Kingdom have recognized such dissonance in civilian-military relations and have responded by developing and reinforcing the warrior ethic in their armed services, the Canadian Forces (CF) have only begun to recognize the seriousness of this issue. It is the moral and legal responsibility of military

---

[1] Desmond Morton, "Armed Forces: New Role in a New World," *The Ottawa Citizen,* (19 March 1990), A9.

leaders and all Canadians to make certain that their servicemen and women are trained, educated and nurtured with the right military ethos before being sent into harm's way. This is the most important guarantor that Canadian soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen are mentally and physically prepared to fight and win.

What follows is a brief examination of significant cultural change in North America since 1945 and its impact on the values and ethos of the Canadian Forces. In this overview it is important to note that challenges to the Canadian military ethos are not limited to social change, but include other major influences such as national and international legislation, rights of the individual and the adaptation of business management practices; although these too can be traced to cultural change. The debate is not simply to determine the value of a military ethos, but to consider whether or not Canada will have armed forces that are capable of fighting.

Battle Ready – The Moment of Truth

In every military career there are probably one or two significant events that shape who you are as a person or leave an indelible impression on how you view the effectiveness and consequence of your profession. One such event began in the summer of 1996 and became a catalyst for questioning the Canadian military ethos and the Canadian Forces' future as a profession of arms. It was the shock treatment needed to draw attention to the warrior ethic in the Canadian navy and raise doubts about its existence in the CF.

At the commencement of a second year in command of a Halifax-class frigate on the West Coast, the author and his ship's company were in the middle of a six-month readiness and

---

[2] Sir Michael Rose, "Soldiers aren't Civilians, They Need Their Own Set of Rules," *Edmonton Journal,* (09 January 1998), A17.

sustainment programme that would see the ship through a six-month operational deployment to the Arabian Gulf. The deployment was one of a number of firsts for a Canadian warship. The frigate was the first assigned to a United States Navy (USN) Surface Action Group (SAG) for work ups, full integration and transit to the Gulf, at which point it would be assigned to the USN Commander Fifth Fleet and, as another first, deployed with and integrated into a Carrier Battle Group for primarily Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

The situation in the Gulf was tense as a result of violations of the no-fly zone by Saddam Hussein's forces, breaches of UN sanctions by both Saddam Hussein and maritime smugglers of oil and arms, incursions by Iranian air and maritime units against sanction enforcers and the bombing of the Khobar Towers complex on 25 June 1996 by terrorists, allegedly under the leadership of Osama bin Laden. The bombing left 19 American airmen dead and over 370 Americans and Saudis injured. For many of the ship's company it was their first "operational" mission into a special designated area for interdiction patrols. With support from formation and squadron teams, nothing was left to chance in making the ship and its crew battle ready. A complete six-month regimen of trials and work ups for weapons firings, SAG integration, enhanced C4ISR, intelligence teams, interpreters, cultural briefings and full medical teams boosted everyone's confidence, and through this process it was considered that the moral, legal and cultural foundations for potential combat had been laid – or so it was thought.

Canada's post-Cold War navy is much different than its predecessor. Gone are the simulated naval battles against the entire Soviet Order of Battle and gone are obsolescent destroyer escorts[3] of a bygone era. Present are real missions with areas of operation that are

[3] Affectionately referred to as the "greyhounds of death", destroyer escorts and helicopter-carrying destroyers of the St-Laurent, Restigouche and Annapolis class were primarily Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) platforms configured

higher risk and demand state of the art missile-technology frigates with impressive survivability and the potential to unleash tremendous firepower. Concurrent with the navy's improvements in technology and capability has been a notable increase in the complexity of operations and individual and team training required to fight

maintenance, was a new experience for the entire ship's company.[5] Over and above the training method's effectiveness at improving the skill, confidence, reaction time and accuracy of weapons teams, the entire crew began to adopt an entirely different mind-set and appreciation for the mission at hand. Instead of *training* for the possibility of combat, the crew was *living* it. It wasn't war, but upon entering the Strait of Hormuz in March 1997, the ship's company was mentally prepared to fight and win if necessary. This resulted in another first and the most important one during the deployment – a valuable lesson had been learned from the USN on what was really meant by possessing a warrior ethic in the profession of arms. The questions eating away at the author were how and when did our "ready aye ready" profession start to lose sight of the warrior ethic as part of its ethos? The answer to this question begins with a snapshot of civil-military relations and their cultural impact on the CF since the end of the Second World War.

Somalia - Looking Back and at Ourselves

In the wake of the Somalia crisis and subsequent Commission of Inquiry's report on alleged failures of leadership in the Canadian Forces, a number of studies and reports were commissioned by the Minister of National Defence to examine the findings of the Commission and to right alleged wrongs in military leadership, values and ethics. Among the many reports and recommendations forwarded to the Prime Minister in the spring of 1997 was a document

[5] While Canadian ships conduct extensive combat and weapons training at sea, including live-fire weapons training, to prepare for operational missions, the latter are conducted only on a scheduled basis. On completion of firing events, crews are stood down and ammunition is returned to magazines.

entitled "Ethos and Values in the Canadian Forces."[6] Aided by a professional facilitator, the report was produced by a group of Canadian Forces personnel, representative of a cross-section of occupations, ranks, service environments and experience. On behalf of all members of the CF, they set out to articulate "essential beliefs and values" that embodied the "distinctive character or spirit – the ethos – of the Canadian Forces.[7] Looking to Canada's military history, they cited the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the Battle of the Atlantic and the Battle of Britain as examples of distinctive character and spirit where typically *Canadian* qualities of "respect for the individual, resourcefulness, judgement and self-discipline" brought victory in each of these historic campaigns and pride to Canada as a nation.[8]

Notwithstanding these famous milestones, the report suggested that dramatic geopolitical changes after the Second World War tended to isolate the Canadian public physically, socially and politically from their military. As Canada demobilized its forces and retreated into a post-war focus on the economy, Canadians found it easy to ignore the activities taking place on Canadian Forces bases; most of which (army and air force) were located long distances away from major population centres. They also showed a lack of interest in the Korean conflict (1950-53)[9], fear of Nuclear Armageddon during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, apathy for the

---

[6] Report to the Prime Minister, "Ethos and Values in the Canadian Forces," The Honourable M. Douglas Young, P.C., M.P., Minister of National Defence and Veterans Affairs, 25 March 1997. Under cover of a letter, this report was one of many forwarded to the Prime Minister and comprised Minister Young's report on the state of the Armed Forces.

[7] Ibid. i.

[8] Ibid. 1.

[9] Interviewed by the CBC on his book, "Blood on the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War," David Bercuson discussed the detachment of Canadians from this unknown and forgotten war. "[It was] the first war that we fought in which there was very little connection between the Canadian people and Canadian society and the war itself. Most people didn't even know these folks went over there. So there was this massive disconnection between what was happening in Korea and what was happening at home." See CBC's "The National Features," at www.tv.cbc.ca/national/pgminfo/korea/bercuson.html.

Unification Crisis of 1968[10] and significant anti-war sentiment during America's foray into Vietnam.

In the 1980s and 1990s service personnel pondered the impact of the repatriation of the Constitution and the uncertainty of their future in a new world order. Introduction of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ignited discussion about changes to the military justice system and potential challenges to fundamental beliefs and values of the Canadian Forces. There was a sense that the "CF must conform to Canadian legislation involving social values such as the Charter in order to reflect and represent Canadian society."[11] Moral values, rules and regulations unique to the military and designed to instill characteristics such as discipline, group cohesion and unlimited liability for one's country could potentially be contested. In addition, the organization faced the introduction of women in combat, downsizing after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and most notably, the evolutionary replacement of Cold War deterrence missions by non-traditional ones with Canadian Forces members deployed as peacekeeper, peacemaker, peace-enforcer, humanitarian interventionist and nation builder.

In sum, writers of the report believed that the purpose, culture and values of the Canadian Forces were under stress and the CF ethos needed to be re-examined, re-defined and re-affirmed. Somewhat understandably, most of the report describing this process was unduly influenced by the Somalia affair and resulted in an apologetic treatise on the mettle of Canadian Forces personnel and how they could win back public opinion knowing that "the Canadian people, will

[10] Amalgamation of the three distinctive environmental services (Royal Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force) into one integrated Headquarters with a single Chief of Defence Staff, and the elimination of direct representation to the Minister of National Defence by individual Service Chiefs caused upheaval between the Minister, Paul Hellyer, and his senior military advisors. A combination of traditionalist values and ideological differences held by generals and admirals clashed with Hellyer's mistrust of and miscommunication with senior officers and a "take no prisoners" agenda to gain public attention as a "leader of change" en route to his person al leadership bid for Prime Minister. As a result of these differences, a number of generals and admirals were either fired or forced to take early retirement amid some public controversy.

trust and support…the Canadian Forces, only if [the Canadian people] can see that [the Canadian Forces] *deserve[s]* their support."[12]

The authors identified the problem – culture and values under stress – but did not pursue the issue beyond winning back public opinion in order to inspire members of the CF and redress the wrongs of Somalia. In retrospect, Canadians could not have asked more of their military over the previous five decades, and most would probably admit that, given the relative size, resources and commitments of the CF, there was little more that could have been accomplished. Encouraged perhaps by the same *can do* spirit of their wartime predecessors, the men and women of the Canadian Forces made a solid account of themselves. Distinguished efforts in all peacekeeping missions since the Suez in 1956[13] were followed by participation in the 1991 Gulf War and challenging peace enforcement missions in Somalia, the Former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Kosovo, East Timor, and most recently, Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea in the War on Terrorism.

Nevertheless, beneath unwavering public support for Canadian peacekeeping missions and the brief celebration of victory in the Cold War, a new reality has been changing the nature and substance of the Canadian military ethos. Based on its UN and Cold War performances, core values of the profession of arms in the CF such as "duty, courage, discipline, dedication, teamwork and honour,"[14] remain as solidly entrenched as they were in the past; however, it has been five decades since Canadian Forces personnel have been engaged in sustained high intensity combat. Not surprisingly, the moral component of Canadian Forces fighting power has

---

[11] Emily Merz and Amy Wilson, "Military Traditions and Laws as Exercised in the Framework Created by Canadian Social Legislation," Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 14 August 2002, 12.
[12] "Ethos and Values in the Canadian Forces," 6.
[13] United Nations Association of Canada Fact Sheets, "The UN and Peacekeeping," 2002, www.unac.org/en/link_learn/fact_sheets/peacekeeping.asp
[14] "Ethos and Values in the Canadian Forces," 7.

diminished over time. Worn down by incremental social pressures and the extraordinary safety and security provided by its relationship and proximity to the world's dominant superpower, the warrior ethic is in danger of disappearing. Recognizing this danger and its impact on military effectiveness reinforces the importance of understanding cultural change and incorporating it with any intent for military transformation.

Understanding the Cultural Gap and Imperatives of Change

The inevitability of cultural change in society places significant pressures on militaries to adapt or alter their beliefs, values and characteristics to fit the civilian society that they serve. This can be particularly upsetting for armed forces as the general direction of social change may run counter to widely held professional military beliefs and even be perceived to undermine the fighting performance of troops. This perception can become problematic for militaries that do not recognize a widening or closing gap between civilian society and their own as it denies opportunities to integrate or adapt change to military culture in order to keep the right balance and either maintain or improve effectiveness. More often than not, those in positions of leadership are influenced strongly by service tradition and previous practice, and may be the most difficult to convince that adaptation or change could be beneficial or even necessary.

The integration of women into combat roles in the late 1980s is a good example of how far out of step a large organization could be in recognizing, understanding and preparing for the inevitable integration process . The liberation of women in Canada from homemaker to income earner began during the post-war period and accelerated from the mid-1960s to today where it is a rarity not to have women involved across the full spectrum of employment and in any field

previously dominated by men. This is in stark contrast to the angst, fear and foot dragging by CF combat environments in accepting social and demographic changes already acknowledged by the society they represented. The gap between civil and military positions on this issue was large enough that the frustration of politicians, social activists and Canadian women caused the Human Rights Tribunal to impose change on a reluctant Canadian Forces. Sensationalized concerns over the ability of the "weaker sex" to meet combat standards or to interfere with unit cohesion in the heat of battle were little more than red herrings. Women, like men, that do not meet combat standards are weeded out. As demonstrated recently in the Iraq War, women fought as they had trained with their male peers, showed bravery through adversity and fulfilled their commitment to serve. In Canada today, it is difficult for the average serviceman to imagine not working alongside women.

The point being made here is not to link women with the disappearance of the warrior ethic, of which there is no link, but to highlight their introduction into combat roles as but one of a number of imperatives constantly at work and imposing change on the Canadian military. Determining what change is necessary and what change is good and how to manage these changes for militaries within a democratic system of government are the real challenges.

Dr John Hillen, a member of the U.S. National Security Study Group, categorized imperatives of change into three groups: functional, legal and social. The first two imperatives place pressures on the military through limiting factors. Functional imperatives could be limited by strategy, resources (financial and human), technologies and institutional models (bureaucrat or warrior), while legal imperatives could be limited by legislation to legitimize roles and govern the conduct of the military.[15] Although contentious issues in both areas would demand thorough debate at all levels of defence and government, decisions reached in these areas were ultimately

made for the betterment of national security. For the third category, Hillen regarded social imperatives as "anti-functional because they are not necessarily derived from security needs and can even at times be entirely divorced from them."[16] From this, he deduced that militaries are constantly challenged by a paradoxical situation in which they are expected to "protect the professional culture necessary to perform its missions in the unnatural stresses of war and within the legal prerogatives of government, and yet remain responsive and appropriately attuned to the civilian culture it serves."[17] The existence of this dilemma is no different in Canada and may in fact be more pronounced given the unmilitary character of the nation.

Geopolitics and Functional Imperatives

Before examining the impact of social imperatives on Canadian Forces culture, it is helpful first to identify what functional imperatives are important and uniquely Canadian. While unfair to generalize Canada's military history through the title of a single publication, G.F.G. Stanley's work, *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People*[18], is an accurate portrayal of a national temperament that is pre-disposed to believing in a near impenetrable sense of safety and security. Although the myth of Canada being a "fireproof house" has been all but discarded, the idea has never been completely forgotten by some elements of Canadian society. There is good reason for this. Since its founding as a nation, Canada with its vast geography and natural barriers has not been witness to any invasion by a foreign military and has benefited from the close relations and benevolent protection of

---

[15] John Hillen, "Must US Military Culture Reform?" *Parameters,* Vol. XXIX, No. 3, Autumn 1999, pp. 9-10.
[16] Ibid. 10-11.
[17] Ibid. 11.

superpower allies. First Great Britain, when still an empire, and then the United States as a growing and influential force in global politics, finances and economics.

With these factors in mind, Canada's post-World War II functional military imperatives had nowhere to grow but down. Canadians settled into a stable and peaceful lifestyle, largely unaffected by matters of the Cold War. This was a testament to the success of Western deterrence strategy and politics and it enabled Canada's war veterans to quietly fade away in the absence of new war fighting missions. Canadian governments reduced military expenditures while the navy, army and air force engaged in increasingly benign exercises against phantom cold war adversaries under a cloak of nuclear deterrence. Canada's defence budget from 1964 onward suffered a constant relative decline in real dollars as did resources assigned to uniformed personnel, which were reduced in complement from a maximum of some 120,000 in the early sixties to less than 60,000 today despite a doubling in population over the same period. Health care, education and issues related to welfare, the economy and the environment would consistently overshadow defence.

The Cold War ended dramatically with the collapse of the Soviet Union and created a new environment and more changes. Canada's military would discover a new version of peacekeeping and participate in coalition efforts to stem the conflict and challenges presented by the internal disintegration of old states and the creation of new and unstable ones. Referred to as Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) by American strategists, Canadians engaged in these new peace enforcement operations would experience an exponential increase in deployments in a sometimes hostile environment and often without the benefit of clear goals, objectives and a defined end-state. While not total war, the bullets, mortars, mines and casualties

---

[18] G.F.G. Stanley, "Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People," 2nd ed., (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1960).

of operations undertaken on behalf of peace missions, humanitarian interventions and the war on terrorism were and continue to be equally demanding and terrifying to present-day soldiers as they were to veterans of the world wars. In today's combat situations, however, most Canadian servicemen and women are without an ethos that could make the difference between fighting to win and fighting to survive.

As noted by Hillen, if "war fighting still determines the central beliefs, values and complex symbolic formations that define military culture…how might services change if war fighting is no longer the primary mission."[19] While the Canadian Forces have adapted remarkably well to a wide range of peace support missions, including combat, they are destined to become a force of decreasing effectiveness in an environment of increased expectations from both society and government. Unlike the American public, who have recognized and accepted changes in the global security environment and support a warrior ethic in their armed forces, Canadians have been slow to accept and respond to new security challenges and remain largely indifferent to the modest capability of their military and care even less about its values and capacity to fight.

The Social Imperatives

Few would argue the merits of developing a military service that reflects the values of the society that it serves, but there are specific roles that societies expect of their militaries that incorporate cultural values outside social norms. These are the mental and physical preparations

to kill or risk death in pursuit of legitimate objectives of the state. The cultural atmosphere necessary to accommodate these qualities in a soldier, sailor, airman or airwoman have always been complex in light of continuous social and moral pressures, but can be made infinitely more difficult if changes to organizational policy confuse the boundaries of the military ethos.

A government decision in 1972 to integrate military and civilian components of the Department of National Defence into one Headquarters – NDHQ – has been both praised and chastised for its impact on the command of the Canadian Forces and management of DND. For better or worse, it represents a period of dramatic social change in the department and is useful as an example on how significant societal changes can influence the control, administration and culture of Canada's military.

In his seminal work on Canada's public administration, Donald Savoie highlighted how a tentative approach to reform such as federal government attempts to introduce managerial culture in the public service can "run the risk of seeing an institution lose its way."[20] While the Management Review Group overseeing the re-organization of DND in 1971-72 was less tentative, its recommendations to streamline bureaucracy and create efficiencies also included the concept of cultural change. The merger of civilian and military societies within an integrated headquarters and greater Ottawa workforce of civil servants left the CF little choice but to adopt public service administration concepts and practices. In the fullness of time, the option of becoming a bureaucratic organization or profession no longer seemed to be the purview of the Canadian Forces. Once captured by the matrix, the question of which came first for the CF – the profession or the bureaucracy – seemed no longer worthy of debate. The military view would suggest that military effectiveness gave way to civilian efficiency, the institution gave way to the

---

[19] Hillen, 11.

individual, and professional development and education gave way to policy process and application.

Many questions have also been raised about NDHQ's enormous bureaucracy of over 8,000, the requirement for a myriad of consensual signatures and the days of lead time that delay minor policy documents, and cynical reference to project management as a lifetime occupation. Civilianization of the department is often blamed for bureaucratic red tape. Historian Jack Granatstein suggests that most complaints are exaggerated, but civilians do tend to occupy positions much longer than their military counterparts. In this regard, he feels that NDHQ has "become small-p politicized, part of a culture of going along to get along" where "civilian bureaucratic values, while not compatible with military virtues, have triumphed over them" and "military advice is homogenized to suit political necessity rather than military reality."[21] Historian Desmond Morton views the situation as a glass that is half full. While acknowledging that the 1972 merger required significant adjustment, he views military objections to civilianization "like most criticisms, there is some truth, some exaggeration and some desire to find an agreed scapegoat for unresolved disagreements."[22] He sees good and bad in the relationship and suggests that the CF should focus on eliminating the bad. For example, Morton suggests it is big plus that "civilians [can] carry DND's message to the rest of the Ottawa bureaucracy in ways that get results," but is very concerned over the application of "civil service personnel practices and policies to military personnel [that] has demoralized CF members whose contract with the State is wholly different."[23] It is apparent that somewhere within these views is

---

[20] Donald Savoie, "Governing from the Centre: The Concentration of Power in Canadian Politics," (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 354-55.
[21] J.L. Granatstein, "For Efficient and Effective Military Forces," Minister's Report to the Prime Minister on the State of the Canadian Forces, 25 March 1997.
[22] Desmond Morton, "What to Tell the Minister," Minister's Report to the Prime Minister on the State of the Canadian Forces, 25 March 1997.
[23] Ibid.

an appropriate balance and mandate to move forward with one voice and one team on matters concerning the Department as a whole.

The recently published document, *Organization and Accountability*, goes a long way to describing the complexities of the CDS-DM relationship within DND and explains "why a proper understanding of accountability inside the Department and the Forces is essential to the health and effectiveness of the two organizations."[24] For the military ethos to survive in this environment, however, the authority and expertise to make recommendations on issues of operational primacy rests with the Chief of the Defence Staff, not the Deputy Minister. Despite the long-term impact of the 1972 cultural merger, these lines of authority cannot be blurred.

So what effect has civilianization or social imperative transformation had on the rank and file of the Canadian Forces and their ability to

greater numbers than ever before. Shortages of Captains are evident in the army and the air force, but the dearth of Lieutenant (N) s in the navy is particularly alarming. In this regard, the CF must be prepared to accept and manage the existence of a cultural generation gap.

Generations Apart

As a visiting lecturer to the Canadian Forces College in the spring of 2003, Carleton School of Business Professor Linda Duxbury explained to a class of senior officers that the loss of talented junior officers from the service and the competition to find and retain them were due not only to a shrinking demographic and civilian competition, but were also the result of the gap between generations. Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Wong of the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute reinforced some of Professor Duxbury's insights in his monograph *Generations Apart*.[25] Wong explains that generational rifts are not a new phenomenon, but that the attitudinal divide "between Baby Boomers (born between 1943 and 1960) and Generation Xers (born between 1960 and 1980)" created atypical differences as a result of "the increased responsibilities of captains and the fact that many blame their departure on senior officer lack of understanding."[26] Boomers and Generation Xers were raised under completely different circumstances. The former enjoyed youth during a period of high employment, received a lot of attention and faced the future with optimism while the latter was raised with increased numbers of broken marriages, competition with women in the workplace

[25] Leonard Wong, "Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps," (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, October 2000).
[26] Michael P. Noonan, "The Future of America's Profession of Arms," *Orbis,* Volume 45, Number 2, Spring 2001, p. 310.

and a sense that work was meant to earn money and not to achieve professional satisfaction.[27] Add to this the fact that entry-level work for young Generation Xers in civilian corporations was more often than not equivalent to the level of responsibility of senior ranking Boomers in the Service. This made it easy for "Xers to place the blame for Army problems on generational differences rather than the classic line versus staff tension."[28] Wong cautions that Generation Y officers (the Nintendo Generation, Generation 2001 or Generation Next) are now entering the service and "that understanding generational differences will become even more critical with three unique generations in the officer corps."[29]

The Remedy

What a society gets in its armed forces is exactly what it asks for, no more and no less. What it asked for tends to be a reflection of what it (sic) is.[30]

General Sir John Hackett

What can be done to restore the fundamental warrior characteristic in the CF? First and foremost it is imperative that senior leadership in the Canadian Forces recognize the impact of fifty years of cultural evolution in Canada and address the conflict between civilian and military understandings of ethos. The CF must articulate the indispensable role of military ethos in the development and makeup of every member in uniform and promote with confidence who we are and what we represent. We must publicize that we are citizens first; subordinate to civilian authority, and that our ethos reflects our national culture, values, beliefs and norms. We must not be fearful of re-affirming "the historic concept of unlimited liability that must exist between

[27] Ibid. 310.
[28] Wong, "Generations Apart," p. 9.
[29] Ibid. 30-31.

a soldier and his nation"[31] and that this contract is non-negotiable. Our fundamental purpose is to serve Canada and Canadians, and that by doing so we limit our freedoms, accept responsibilities that other citizens do not and abide by the highest ethical and moral standards as laid down in national codes of conduct and the laws of armed conflict. In return, we simply ask for support to carry out our duties and acceptance of the military's unique service ethic, which is central to our profession and its future.

Second, and a taller order than the first, is making the change. Cultural transformation and acceptance of the warrior ethic will take time, patience and national support for those critical functional imperatives – strategy, resources and technologies. In this regard, the Prime Minister should be the catalyst for top down interest in every MOOTW mission assigned to the Canadian Forces. This will automatically engage the interest of central agencies and every principal cabinet minister and senior civil servant affected by foreign and defence affairs. With this focus, the next step would be to produce a strategic framework from which current and future foreign affairs and defence priorities could be established. With so many varied domestic and international commitments from homeland security and Ballistic Missile Defence to the War on Terrorism and impending peace support missions in Afghanistan and Africa, the Canadian Forces are spread too thin and are crying out for strategic focus.

Third, a commitment of resources beyond the next election to enable future planning, procurement and training to meet the focused mandate established at step two. Finally, a commitment from the Canadian Forces to transform culturally, technologically, institutionally and economically through true joint planning (all environments at all levels), experimentation, training and education. In regard to the latter, full support should be given to the

---

[30] Richard Evraire, "The Canadian Military Profession – A Question of Credibility," www.cda-cdai.ca/quarterly/quarterly3-3-5.htm.

recommendations made by Brigadier General (retired) Joe Sharpe and Dr Allan English to develop a "joint culture in the CF" and take a proper long-term approach to weaning the Canadian Forces away from management-oriented processes and re-establishing the values and ethos and organizational culture of a profession of arms.[32] The anticipated publication of the Canadian *Profession of Arms Manual,* is long overdue, but its arrival should finally provide official descriptions, definitions and processes related to professional concepts of a Canadian military ethos and its component parts and institutional framework.

Under the sub-heading "Culture and Values," the authors of Minister Young's report acknowledged that it takes *courage* to clear mines in Bosnia and Cambodia and likewise, it takes courage to jump from a Search and Rescue helicopter into the freezing Atlantic. These, they stated, were the duties of servicemen and women, duties "for which they are trained" and for a purpose "best explained by a personal commitment to serve Canada and Canadians."[33] Advancing this to the present, the author firmly believes that while Canada has the potential to prepare for certain combat roles in war, there are cultural trends, new social attitudes, expectations and a changing security environment that will expand the enormous challenges faced by our servicemen and women of today. Unless action is taken now to create a willing military and fully supportive civilian population to help them understand who they are and what vital responsibilities they carry for the nation, they will not develop the mental and physical capacity – the warrior ethic – to go to war. It's their bottom line and ours.

---

[31] Rose, "Soldiers aren't Civilians," A17
[32] G.E. (Joe) Sharpe and Allan D. English, "Principles for change in the Post-Cold War Command and Control of the Canadian Forces," (Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, Queen's Printer, 2002), 94-99.
[33] "Ethos and Values in the Canadian Forces," p. 7.