

Between Dream and Reality: the Canadian Mission to Somalia

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Introduction

In the spring, summer, and fall of 1992, the United Nations, concerned about the breakdown of national government in Somalia and the spectre of famine there, sought international help to restore some semblance of law and order in Somalia and feed its starving citizens. Canada, among other nations, was asked to help. After months of planning and training, and after a change in the nature of the United Nations mission from a peacekeeping mission to a peace enforcement mission, Canadian Forces personnel, as part of a coalition offerees led by the United States, were deployed for service to Somalia, starting in December 1992. Many of the Canadian personnel involved in the deployment belonged to the Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group, (CARBG) itself made up largely of soldiers from the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR, a paratroop battalion), with other army personnel added to it.¹

On the night of March 16-17, 1993, near the city of Be let Huen, Somalia, members of 2 Commando (2CDO) of the Canadian Airborne Regiment beat a bound 16-year-old Somali youth, Shidane Arone. Canadians were shocked, and they began to ask hard questions. How could Canadian a young man die while being held in their custody? Part of the explanation lies with the level of disconnects between the dream and the reality of the mission.

We will discuss a number of illusions concerning the mission, the resulting lack of preparedness and the tragic consequences. We will see that it was believed that the CAR was deemed ready for deployment in spite of serious discipline problems. There had also been a major reorganisation of the unit and the commanding officer had been replaced just prior to deployment. The Battle group that was sent to Somalia was trained for a Chapter Six [i.e. peacekeeping] operation. When the operation changed to a Chapter Seven there was little time to train on the Rules of Engagement for the new mission. In addition, the Battle group had trained to be deployed to Bossasso, a port city in Northern Somalia. However, once in theatre they deployed to Belet Huen. This left little opportunity to adjust logistics and supplies. Belet Huen also represented a different security challenge from the relatively peaceful Bossasso. Another

1 This included A Squadron, an armoured car squadron from the Royal Canadian Dragoons, a mortar platoon from 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, and an engineer squadron from 2 Combat Engineer Regiment.

inadequacy in the training and planning for the mission concerned cultural preparedness. Members of the CAR were not prepared for Somali culture and the environment. The resulting lack of understanding combined with a "warrior mindset" led some members of the CAR to adopt an overly aggressive attitude towards the Somalis.

Method

From 1995 to 1997 I served as an external researcher to the Commission of Inquiry into the Activities of the Canadian Airborne Battle Group in Somalia. During this time, I conducted research focussed upon the socio-cultural causes for the events which took place in Somalia in 1993 when Canadian soldiers tortured one Somali and killed a number of other Somali civilians during a peace operation. This work was published in June 1997 (*The Canadian Airborne in Somalia: a Socio-cultural Inquiry*. Ottawa: Ministry of Public Works and Government Services, 1997).² The interpretations and analysis in this paper are a drawn from my own research and from the Inquiry Report.

My own research was based on library research, video evidence and on fifty in depth interviews held with military personnel from a variety of rank levels in addition to several focus groups held with military families. Interviewees were selected randomly and through snowball word of mouth, that is, if a soldier suggested that I should speak to "so and so", I usually followed up on it. Interviews were conducted almost exclusively with former Airborne soldiers and military personnel who deployed to Somalia in 1993. Quotes from these interviews appear in this article, however they were altered in order to conceal the identity of the interviewees. For example, French was translated into English and the vocabulary was "levelled" so that officers could not be distinguished from enlisted men, nor men from women, and from this point on, I will refer to all interviewees as male and Airborne soldier. In order to ensure fidelity in the changes, a copy of the altered quotation was then sent back to the interviewee so that he could check that I had, in fact, captured the sense of his statements. These statements appear in this text in *Italics*.

The public inquiry into the Somali deployment was officially named the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia and it was established in March 1995. The Inquiry was one of the largest investigations of Canadian Forces in Canadian history.³ In order to supply the

2 I wish to thank Chairman Letourneau, Commissioners Rutherford and Debarats in addition to the Commission staff for their assistance and technical support during this time. I also wish to thank the commanders and staff of the Canadian military bases I visited, the members of the Somalia Inquiry Liaison Team and the CF Personnel and Applied Research Unit. On the Academic side, I am grateful to the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa and to my research assistants Jason Dunn, Irving Gold and Richard Veenstra.

3 The staff consisted of the three commissioners (2 judges and 1 distinguished journalist) and a large staff of lawyers, researchers and a number of RCMP

Inquiry with the necessary documentation the military set up the Somalia Inquiry Liaison Team (SILT). SILT initially estimated that it would handle approximately 7,000 documents but by the end of 1996 over 150,000 documents had been processed. Public hearings were also held where members of the Canadian military testified concerning the state of readiness of the CAR and the events that took place during the deployment. It is the Report of this Inquiry⁴ in addition to the documentary evidence tabled there which also forms the basis of this paper.

Dream #1: As the UN Standby Unit, the CAR was ready for deployment to Somalia

According to the Somalia Inquiry, Commanders and staff officers at all levels never questioned their assumption that the Airborne was trained, disciplined, and fit for deployment to Somalia. However evidence presented to the Inquiry suggests that the state of the Airborne was clearly and definitively not what it was assumed to be. The Regiment had faced numerous controversies and repeated upheavals prior to deployment to Somalia.

1.1. Early Signs of Disciplinary Problems

By 1984, discipline at CFB Petawawa, where the Airborne was stationed, had deteriorated to such an extent that the SSF Commander sent a memo to base commanding officers, pointing out disobedience, increased incidences of impaired driving offences, inadequate control of stores, ammunition, equipment, pyrotechnics, and weapons, resulting in thefts or losses, and cases of assault. A 1985 incident in Fort Coulonge, involving a Canadian Airborne soldier who had been embroiled in a brawl and killed a civilian with a machete, led to a review.⁵ This study, known as the Hewson report,⁶ made several observations and conclusions about the state of the CAR at that time. The Hewson report concluded that the Canadian Airborne had a higher incidence of assaults than did other SSF units. The report recommended that only mature, trained infantry soldiers should be eligible to serve in the Canadian Airborne, and that battalions and career managers needed to co-operate to ensure the suitable staffing of the Regiment.

investigators. Outside experts, such as myself, were also commissioned to do independent studies on the military justice system, training, racism in the CF, military culture etc.

4 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair*, 5 Volumes (Ottawa: Public Works Canada, 1997).

5 In 1985, the CDS ordered a study to review infractions and antisocial behaviour within Force Mobile Command, and in particular in the SSF, of which the Airborne was a part.

6 after its chairman, MGen C.W. (Bill) Hewson, then Chief of Intelligence and Security

The Hewson Report recommendations, however, were not acted upon and prior to deployment in 1992 to Somalia very similar observations could be made. There was still a lack of commitment on the part of the CAR'S parent regiments to ensure that their best members were sent to the CAR and there were no strict standards for selection of soldiers for the CAR. The selection process - operated, as it was, by the parent regiments - left the CAR vulnerable to being used as a 'dumping ground' for overly aggressive or otherwise problematic personnel. Despite the recognised need of the CAR for more mature soldiers, some soldiers sent to the Regiment had been involved in recent misconduct.

It is important, at this point, to note that the CAR was different than other regiments. The current Canadian army regimental divisions reflect the geographic and linguistic divisions in Canada, for example - western anglophone (PPCLI, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry), central and eastern anglophone (The RCR, The Royal Canadian Regiment), and central francophone (Royal 22e Regiment). This regional base also gives each regiment a certain character. The Airborne, however, drew members from all three regiments who were then posted to the Airborne for a number of years to gain experience and then returned to their parent regiment.

Until 1977, the Airborne's infantry component was represented by two commandos - 1 Commando which was manned by R22eR (Van Doos) and 2 Commando which was manned by the PPCLI and RCR. From 1977 on, the regiment had three commandos - 1 Commando, 2 Commando made up of PPCLI only and a new 3 Commando made up of RCR. The commandos were essentially broken out along regimental lines. Some of our interviewees felt that the purpose of having the three commandos was so the regiments could track their own people and thus control promotion and performance evaluations.

The Army did not want a fourth regiment. Other armies have a separate airborne regiment/division that has its own cohesive, integrated structure on a par with other regiments/divisions. But the Canadian army did not want this, so the Airborne became a unit where soldiers and officers were sent temporarily. Career advancement was to take place in the parent regiment.

Whatever the reason, the result was that, internally, the Airborne also reflected the geographic and linguistic divisions of Canada. This had an impact on unit performance and cohesion.

In addition to internal divisions there was a substantial turnover of personnel within the Canadian Airborne Regiment during the active posting season in the summer of 1992.⁷ Also, shortly before its deployment to Somalia, the regiment

⁷ This rate of changeover was not unique to the Regiment but was nonetheless excessive and contributed further to lowering the cohesion of the unit during the period of preparation for Operation Deliverance Reorganisation and the reduction of staffing of the CAR had affected the functioning of the unit, especially 2

had undergone a major reorganisation that included a troop reduction from a strength of 754 to 601 soldiers of all ranks. It had also just lost its formation status, and its components, in turn, had lost their status as independent units. This meant that the regiment was converted to a normal infantry battalion. The commanding officer (CO) went from being a full colonel to a lieutenant-colonel and the officers commanding (OCs) - majors - became just company commanders under the authority of the CO.

The command structure of the Canadian Airborne Regiment changed in the summer of 1992. It went from being commanded by a full Colonel, with the powers of a commanding officer, to being downgraded to a sub-unit commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. Each of the Commandos, in the summer of 1992, were commanded by a Commanding Officer, a Lieutenant Colonel. In the summer of 1992 they became Officers Commanding. They were Majors and had no powers of punishment. There is a difference between being a Lieutenant Colonel, Commanding Officer or being an Officer Commanding as a Major.⁸

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

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

Immediately after downsizing began, the CAR went on its last mission to Somalia. When it was deployed to Somalia, the unit had to be augmented with additional personnel (such as medics, engineers, etc.) thus becoming the Canadian Airborne Battle Group (CARBG). The commanding officer of the CARBG was the CO of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. This commander had been in control of the unit for less than two months, having been just recently appointed to this post.

In addition, poor judgement was shown in the screening of CAR personnel for the mission, especially in relation to 2 Commando. Short-term morale appears to have taken precedence over discipline. The unit leadership rejected significant warnings about the suitability of personnel. According to the Somalia Inquiry Report, appointments to key positions in the CAR were allowed to stand in spite of serious misgivings on the part of senior officers and members of the chain of command, and in spite of the fact that the unit was on its first overseas deployment in several years.

Commando, which experienced a larger turnover of officers and junior leaders than had the other two commandos.

8 Gen Boyle April 20, 1995, meeting with the Judge Advocate General, Ottawa, pp. 52-53.

Discipline breakdown within the Airborne's 2 Commando during preparations for Somalia was of particularly serious concern. This breakdown included disobedience of unit rules, socially unacceptable behaviour, and random criminal activity, ranging from the commando's mounting of the Confederate (or Rebel) flag in its quarters⁹ to reports of excessive aggression, damaging of property, the burning of a duty sergeant's car, unauthorised pyrotechnic explosions, and drunkenness.

1.2. Incidents involving members of 2 Commando point to a serious breakdown in discipline in the weeks prior to the CAR 's deployment to Somalia

A series of incidents took place on October 2 and 3, 1992, suggesting a lack of discipline in 2 Commando during training for operations in Somalia. Military pyrotechnics were exploded illegally at a party at the junior ranks' mess at CFB Petawawa. In addition, a vehicle was set on fire belonging to 2 Commando's duty officer who had reportedly called the Military Police following the disturbances at the mess. (This act resembled an earlier attack in 1990 on another officer who had responsibility for the enforcement of discipline. His car had also been burned.) Later that night various members of 2 Commando held another party, this time in nearby Algonquin Park, at which they set off more pyrotechnics and ammunition.

Senior officers believed that 1 Commando and 3 Commando had lesser disciplinary problems, although there were reports of illegally stored personal weapons and improperly held ammunition. Videos showing degrading and violent behaviour during 1 Commando initiation sessions, which came to light following the Regiment's return from Somalia, also provide evidence of breakdowns in leadership and discipline within 1 Commando as well.

The incidents mentioned above were so serious that Lieutenant Colonel Morneau proposed to leave 2 Commando in Canada unless the perpetrators came forward. Brigadier General Beno, after consulting Major General MacKenzie, opposed this plan. Almost everyone suspected of participating in the October incidents was permitted to deploy. Several of these individuals were involved in the incidents in Somalia.

Because of the lack of preparedness and what upper ranks felt were deficiencies in command, Lieutenant Colonel Morneau was replaced as Commanding Officer (CO) by Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu in late October 1992. It was Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu who declared the unit ready to go to Somalia. So, in addition to having to adjust to downsizing, vehicles and the

⁹ Normal and continuous personnel review determined the professionalism and behavioural suitability of various individuals for service on UN operations, but this approach suffered from significant limitations. For example, in 1992, affiliation with racist groups was not, in itself, believed to be inconsistent with membership in the CF, nor was it grounds for release from military service or for the restriction of assignments, postings, or deployments.

mission, soldiers had to adjust to a new commander. "If you don't permit a considerable amount of time to let the Commanding Officer get the unit in shape, get the unit stabilised, trained, socialised and well-motivated, then you're really asking for trouble".

1.3. Cohesion

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

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

The officers come and go. They come in, and spend maybe a year, and then go on to a staff job, and all of a sudden they come back a couple of ranks higher. Instead of the platoon commander they're now the company commander. Whereas the ranks have been there doing the same thing day in or out for years, for an officer it 's a change. So -we're looking at him and saying we just finished that •with the last guy, and now we 're going to start over. So every year it 's repetitive. The same training thing and the officer 's getting his ticket punched. We feel we 're being used as training tools for the officers. So we get very good at what we 're doing, and a lot of the time we knew they were coming to learn their job. Platoon commanders were meant to be lieutenants. That's the way the army's set up. But in the Airborne they have captains. Once an officer, they seem to go from lieutenant to captain. They become smarter overnight - or at least they think they 're smarter. That I believe contributes to some of the problems in the Airborne.

Thus, Airborne officers would be attached to the unit for usually two to three years while NCMs would stay longer. It appears that this led to stronger bonding among the lower ranks and the opportunity for charismatic leaders to emerge among the NCMs. This is reminiscent of World War II combat training strategies where primary group relations embodied in the squad or platoon were apparently very important sources of social support.¹⁰ However, group formation can also be a challenge to good order and discipline. In the Airborne, bonding among the lower ranks cut through and contradicted the more formal

¹⁰ The importance of the primary group in combat was that it set and emphasized group standards of behaviour and sustained the individual in difficult situations. The group was able to enforce its standards by offering or withholding recognition respect and approval (Cockerham 1981: 109).

chain of command. Privates, corporals and master corporals constituted a subgroup." This was noted by the de Faye Board of Inquiry (the military Board of Inquiry into the Somalia events):

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

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

Brigadier General Beno noted a high turnover of officers combined with multiple tours by NCMs in the Airborne Regiment.¹² The constant rotation of leaders appears to have been a major source of irritation with the unit: "The Army has become a big Merry-Go-Round. We are the horses unable to move, the Officers ride us for free, and our NCO's try to keep the system together" (master corporal quoted in Cotton 1979: 39). And while the officers cycled in and out of the Airborne, the men stayed and stayed. This fostered the emergence of informal hierarchies and the formation of subgroups. According to Cotton (1979: 8) "the greatest differences in military attitudes are between the Combat Arms officers and the troops they lead at the Master Corporal rank and below." A primary aspect of the social system of the Airborne platoon was a network of interpersonal linkages which could, at times, contradict the more formal concepts of the chain of command and centralised control. Thus united, the members of the platoon comprised a group with a potential for collective action independent of orders given by the designated leaders of the chain of command.

What is particularly significant is the independence enjoyed by each of the commando units. The three Commandos kept a separate and distinct character

11 It is also important to note that soldiers were given more responsibility in the Airborne than they normally would have in their parent regiment. Maj Magee testified to the BOI (as note 4, p. 1069) that soldiers and NCOs in the Airborne were given more latitude for initiative and more responsibility in many cases.

12 Somalia Inquiry #1 document, Service Paper – The Way Ahead –, Prepared by BGen Beno, May 4, 1993.

each forming a subculture of the Airborne. "Each Commando pretty much stuck together. I guess it was just one of these unwritten rules".

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

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

Commandos acted in concert in training exercises but each commando platoon would be responsible for a specific task. Thus members would not mix with each other while in training. The rationale behind this was, again, to build unit cohesion at the lowest levels. The result was that the commandos became closed subcultures where each commando seemed to have its own personality. 1 Commando (from the R22eR) was flavoured by its French Canadian culture and linguistic specificity. It seemed to specialise in winning sports competitions. 2 Commando (from the PPCLI) members portrayed themselves as the rebels, cowboys, wild ones - "the hardest meanest fighting section," while 3 Commando (from the RCR) seemed to maintain an attitude of "quiet professionalism." 3 Commando called itself the "mountain commando" and spent summers mountain climbing. Each commando set its own policy concerning discipline, matters such as pin-ups and the display of rebel flags, and alcohol consumption at CFB Petawawa and, naturally, in Somalia as well. Our interviewees had quite a bit to say on the difference between the commandos when asked:

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

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

1 Commando is French, so that's the big distinction. 3 Commando is from the Maritimes. They were pretty friendly with the French. Many of them could speak French well. 2 Commando, that's the gang of red necks from out West. They just hate the French. And they're the ones we had all the problems with. They were apart from the rest. They had more trouble with the more complicated operations. For lots of problems, it was the 2 Commando, with their rebel flag. Well, the French had their fleur de Us, too. That's where the conflicts started, the rebels on one side, the fleur de Us on the other. And there was a time, in the eighties, when we were avoiding each other. But we worked together all right when we had to, like on a jump, the Regiment parachuted together. It's just our origins, our different ways of working, that kept us apart. The RCR are very proud - very strict and polished and such. The 22s [Van Doos] were more relaxed, less stressful about rules and regulations, but we still got the job done. We respected the rules, but not like the English. The English were very severe. The other groups considered the 22s pretty slack.

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

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

Before they left for Somalia, the three commandos had been behaving autonomously, acting on their own and developing their own distinct identities which affected the entire unit's ability to work together.

Essentially you had three different units in Somalia. Three different units having three different standards, having three different marching tunes. For example, when you hear that one of the commandos had a certain policy on how many beers they could have, other ones had a different policy. According to the Commission of Inquiry Report:

[A]lthough the CAR was inherently suitable in theory for the mission to Somalia, in fact its actual state of leadership, discipline, and unit cohesion rendered it unfit for any operation in the fall of 1992. From a mission-specific perspective, the CAR was improperly prepared and inadequately trained for its mission, and by any reasonable standard, was not operationally ready for deployment to Somalia. The CAR was unfit to undertake a mission in the autumn of 1992, let alone a deployment to Somalia. The three incidents of October 2 and 3, 1992, indicated a significant breakdown of discipline in 2 Commando during the critical period of training and preparation for operations in Somalia. Military pyrotechnics were discharged illegally at a party in the junior ranks' mess; a car belonging to the duty NCO was set on fire; and various 2 Commando members expended illegally held pyrotechnics and ammunition during a party in Algonquin Park. The illegal possession of these pyrotechnics was the result of theft from DND and the making of false statements. A search conducted on the soldiers' premises uncovered ammunition stolen from DND, as well as 34 Confederate flags. Evidence presented to the Somalia Inquiry indicates that the chain of command, during both the pre-deployment and the in-theatre period, failed as a device for passing and seeking information.

Throughout the period from early 1992 until the deployment of the CAR to Somalia in December 1992, several serious disciplinary problems - one, at least, of a criminal nature - had occurred in the CAR. These incidents, among other matters, were so significant that they led to the dismissal of the Commanding Officer of the CAR, itself a unique and remarkable event in a peacetime army. Yet few officers in the chain of command were even aware of these problems. As one example, the failure of the chain of command at senior levels was striking with regard to how commanders came to understand the state of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in 1992.

Many senior officers in the chain of command, testified to the Inquiry that they were ignorant of the state of fitness and discipline of the CAR. Yet they maintained that they had faith in the appropriateness of the CAR to undertake a

mission because they assumed that it was at a high state of discipline and unit cohesion.

1.4. Rules of Engagement (ROE)

The CARBG left for Somalia with internal problems of organisation, leadership, and discipline. It had not had time to train on an important and central element of its mission's concept of operations - the Rules of Engagement. According to the Inquiry Report:

The rules of engagement drafted by NDHQ officers were too technical and ambiguous to be easily understood and appeared too late in the process to be used effectively in pre-deployment training. More specifically, the ROE reached Canadian soldiers in a piecemeal, slow, and haphazard manner. Multiple, inconsistent versions of the soldier's card explaining the ROE coexisted in theatre. Moreover, the interpretation of the ROE was changed substantially during operations. The ROE themselves were substantively weak and incomplete. They failed, among other things, to address the crucial distinction between a "hostile act" and "hostile intent."

The interpretation and application of the ROE created considerable confusion among the troops. According to my interviewees:

We did get information on the Rules of Engagement verbally. And basically the Rules of Engagement are that if you feel threatened in anyway, it's OK to waste a guy. And the Rules changed every day. At one point they said that we could only shoot between the skirt and the ankle. But the legs are only this big around. As if we 're going to hit that - while the guy 's running. You can shoot 'em if they 're doing this. You can't shoot 'em if they 're doing that. Everyday the rules changed. And I never did get one of these cards I've been hearing about.

We had far too many ambiguous orders given to us and every day things would be changing. It 's like playing telephone when you were a kid. By the time you get to the bottom, the message changes. Orders changed daily, so if you missed a day, you didn 't know where you were. Shoot in the air, shoot in the ground. Shoot wherever. Don't shoot. That was a problem. In addition, the training plan did not provide for sufficient and appropriate training in relation to several non-combat skills that are essential for peacekeeping. According to the Somalia Inquiry Report:

To fulfil its tasking as the UN standby unit, the CAR should have at all times maintained a proficiency in both general purpose combat skills and generic peacekeeping skills (involving, for example, the nature of UN operations and the role of the

peacekeeper, conflict resolution and negotiation, cross-cultural relations, restraint in application of force, and standard UN operations). However, the CAR received little or no ongoing generic peacekeeping training to prepare it for UN operations, despite having been designated for many years as the UN standby unit. This typified the traditional Department of National Defence /Canadian Forces dictum that general-purpose combat training provides not only the best, but also a sufficient basis for preparing for peacekeeping missions.

Pinch (1994b: 62) tells us that, until recently, the dominant CF response has generally been that, for front-line operations, those characteristics of a well-trained combat soldier, preferably from the infantry are the characteristics necessary for successful adjustment to peace operations. He goes on to criticise this as a somewhat limited view of the requirements for peace operations. Malcolm (1993) has also noted that the CF has remained committed to the idea of an exclusively conventional force and, therefore, has been slow in adapting its equipment acquisition program and its personnel training system to the requirements of peace operations. For a long time, the CF has been perceived by the world community as being extremely effective in carrying out peace operations. This has led to what Malcolm terms a "success trap" which acted as a disincentive for critical self-examination and change.

The most recent official policy position taken by the Government of Canada and the Department of National Defence was the 1994 Defence White Paper. Only three paragraphs in the White Paper dealt with military training per se, stating: "The Government believes that *combat training* ... remains the best foundation for the participation of the Canadian Forces in multilateral missions [peacekeeping]. ... such training equips Canadian Forces personnel with the *complete range of skills that may be needed* to meet the varied demands of the unexpected situations they will encounter" (quoted in LaRose-Edwards et al 1997: 9). (emphasis added)

In the post cold war context, soldiers must be more than avid warriors. They must exercise skills that fit more naturally within the realms of civilian policing, diplomacy and social service. In developing the appropriate skills for a given peace support operation, training is arguably more effective than ad hoc experience.

1.5. From Chapter Six to Chapter Seven

Significant changes to the mission - that is, to the U.S.-led peace enforcement mission, Operation Deliverance, and to the composition and size of the force to be deployed to Somalia also affected readiness. Canada was to have originally participated in a traditional Chapter Six peacekeeping-type operation in support of humanitarian relief distribution in the northern area of Somalia around Bossaso. This was change to participation in a Chapter Seven mission that authorised the use of force to accomplish the goals of the mission

According to the Somalia Inquiry "No significant training was conducted by the CARBG after the mission changed from Operation Cordon (a peacekeeping mission under Chapter Six of the United Nations Charter) to Operation Deliverance (a peace enforcement mission under Chapter Seven)". Soldiers such as Trooper Hodgson testified at the military Board of Inquiry that their technical training did not prepare them for what they had to do in Belet Huen. «I believe the training we did for OP DELIVERANCE—wasn't wrong—just not adequate. We did a lot of crowd control and a lot of setting up feeding stations and so forth like that. When we actually arrived in Somalia we didn't do any of that. We did a lot of urban patrolling and a lot of dealing with the public, a lot of dealing with the police force and so forth like that and we didn't do any of that before we left» (Testimony of Pte Hodgson BOI: 1091)

Additionally, no tactical evaluation was made for Operation Deliverance, even though most important aspects of the peace enforcement mission and unit organisation were different from Operation Cordon. At the de Faye Board of Inquiry, NDHQ staff officer Cmdre Cogdon testified that "we were reacting to a political imperative to make [Operation Deliverance] happen as quickly as we can, to jump on a political bandwagon and to get in there...to get in there almost at the same time as the Americans could."

Dream #2: Training for Bossasso when they ended up in Belet Huen

Until the decision to participate in UNITAF, every operational activity, training event, and logistics preparation had been aimed at preparing the Canadian Airborne for operations near Bossasso, a port city in northern Somalia. However, four days after arriving in Somalia in December 1992, the Canadian commander, Colonel Labbe, in discussions with U.S. military planners, had determined that the Canadian contingent would be responsible for maintaining security in the Belet Huen Humanitarian Relief Sector, 350 kilometres from Mogadishu.¹³

This decision had a serious impact on logistics. To support the Canadian ground forces, a naval supply ship, HMCS Preserver, was to stand off Bossasso to provide communications, combat and general stores, casualty evacuation, medical and dental services, and bulk fuel. The entire logistics and materiel

When the government of Canada decided to participate in the U.S.-led peace enforcement operation, it had not committed CF members to carrying out a specific mission. Defining the operational mission in theatre was placed in the hands of Col Labbe by the CDS. He was given little guidance, but urged to move as quickly as possible to secure a high-profile mission. On December 6, 1992, the Canadian contingent was assigned initial responsibility for maintaining security at Baledogle airport. On December 19th, after consultation with the UNITAF commander, Canada's ultimate mission was finally assigned. The Canadian contingent was to be responsible for security in the Belet Huen Humanitarian Relief Sector, one of eight such sectors established under UNITAF.

support plan was to be based on the use of HMCS Preserver as the provider of fresh water, rations, and other essential commodities. Planners in the reconnaissance party¹⁴ and at NDHQ understood that HMCS Preserver would be "alongside in Bossasso", that is, a short distance from Bossasso in the Gulf of Aden, to provide an offshore base for re-supply of the CAR once it reached its area of responsibility in Somalia.

When the projected area of operations had changed, there was little time to make the necessary alterations to the logistics/materiel planning already in place. For example, most of the supplies were already en route to Somalia at the time the mission was changed. Once supplies had been brought ashore, the task of transporting them to the CARBG in Belet Huen (350 kilometres inland) was far greater than the expected arrangement had been for Operation Cordon in Bossasso, where the troops' base camp was only three kilometres away.

Belet Huen also presented a different security challenge than Bossasso. It was geographically significant since it was a strategic gateway between central Somalia, Ethiopia and southern Somalia. The country's only north—south highway ran from Mogadishu along the Shebelle River to Belet Huen. From there, the highway ran north to the central regions of Somalia and west into Ethiopia. Thus, Belet Huen was a critical choke point for the traffic of arms from Ethiopia, and the movement of men to Mogadishu. Belet Huen was thus an area of fierce political competition as local clans struggled to control this critical region. In contrast to the CARB's original destination in Somali, Bossasso in the Northeast, which remained free of famine and most armed hostilities, the Belet Huen area was one of increasing tension. Refugees, militias and contraband were all flowing along the strategic highway to Mogadishu.

The Belet Huen region was known for its extortion and intricate clan rivalries. Banditry and extortion were much more common in Belet Huen than in Bossasso. International relief agencies had to exercise considerable diplomatic skills to navigate the clan tensions that affected every part of their operations. Belet Huen was considered one of the more challenging positions in southern Somalia for a UN military force.

14 An important purpose of the reconnaissance was to inform the planning process for the deployment of Canadian troops to Bossasso. Subsequent decisions to change the nature of the mission and the deployment area within Somalia affected the ultimate value of the October reconnaissance, to the extent that LCol Mathieu would later state that it was of no value at all for the purposes of the CAR's role in Operation Deliverance. Among other changes, LCol Morneault had been relieved of his command; neither LCol Mathieu, as his replacement, nor Col Labbe, as Commander CJFS, had time to conduct a reconnaissance as a part of the new mission; the composition of the field force had been changed from a CAR-reinforced battalion group to the CARBG (representing an increase of approximately 150 personnel and a different composition of reinforcements); and none of the new unit officers had been on the October reconnaissance.

2.1. Cany Organisation

The CARBG base camp was set up astride the Mogadishu/Belet Huen highway. This decision was taken by the Lieutenant Colonel Mathieu who wanted to set up "islands of defence". This layout consisted of small separate sections spread out over a distance of 1.5 kilometres, a layout that left the commandos widely dispersed and separate from each other. This layout was criticised by several interviewees who saw this layout as being very insecure (see below). In his after action report (April 1993) the OC of 1 Commando expressed his preference for a triangular layout, as it emphasised basic principles: simplicity, security, economy of effort, cohesiveness of the Regiment and perimeter defence.

The Bossasso camp was to have been set up like a triangle with a commando in each corner and HQ and supplies protected in the centre. Because of the distance from Mogadishu, supplies in Belet Huen had to be stored and guarded at the base camp which now found itself short of wire, sand bags and timber since only enough for one large triangular base camp had been brought from Canada. The Canadian compound, with its scattered layout, became more of a target for infiltrators and thieves, and security put extra tasking on manpower which was already in short supply because of the change in mission.

Because of the set up of the camp, the commandos arrived in Somalia and reproduced their separateness. Each commando with its own camp strung out along the road with its own medics, its own "weight room," its own recreation areas, its own region to patrol. In essence there were five separate camps (seven if you include the Dragoons and the platoon stationed at the airstrip) and there was little interaction between them. As one soldier said, "It wasn't one big group. It was like segregation. So there was no interest to find out what was going on in somebody else's camp. The camp was set up in such a way that there wasn't a lot of intermingling. Airbornes kept to themselves". (Canadian Airborne soldier)

My interviewees felt that it was militarily very unsound and dangerous to be so dispersed, near a road where there could be drive-by shootings and having the only means of extraction (the airfield) far away, across a bridge. There was even a danger of shooting into each other's camp by accident, if for example, there was a shootout and the belligerents were between the Commando camps: "And just the way the CO set up his camp. You usually protect your headquarters. You don't put your headquarters in the forefront. And you certainly don't set up a camp where you shoot each other."

"It was totally ludicrous to have the camps positioned like that. If an infiltrator came in, there would have been crossfire and we would have killed each other. It was brain dead. Everybody knew it." (Canadian Airborne soldier)

2.2. *Living conditions*

One of the reasons the camp was set that way was the belief that it was not to be a permanent camp. In fact the entire camp seemed to be impermanent. According to my interviewees, the living conditions were like bivouacs. This was probably due to the organisational culture of the Airborne itself, which was oriented to rapid intervention as opposed to a prolonged stay in theatre. The lack of preparedness for a long stay meant that boredom could easily set in. Bivouacking was not necessary. The Royal Canadian Dragoons (RCDs) who were stationed several kilometres away managed to set up a relatively comfortable living situation, which included scrounged furniture, a large TV screen and VCR, and even a mini putt. It is also interesting to note that the Dragoons had little difficulty with theft since they set up their camp as a series of rings with the equipment in the inner circle.

The RCDs made themselves a very large compound. So to get in anywhere you would actually have to travel quite a ways to get in except for the garbage bins which were right at the barb wire fence. They would sneak in there and grab a few things that hadn't burnt and then leave. The RCDs were such a small group and self-contained that everything was in the centre. In eye view of everybody. They had cleared all the brush out and everything. You could see for quite a ways. Other than that, they only hired one person to come in and burn the garbage. Other than that, they kept everybody else out. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

There was an obvious difference between the Airborne camp and the RCDs' camp. The RCDs believe anyone can be uncomfortable, if they want to be uncomfortable. They had sofas and chairs brought into their lounge. Where they got them in the middle of Africa I have no idea. They had a big screen TV sent in. They used a satellite dish. Then, they used a VCR because the satellite dish had been outlawed. They had a beautiful canteen set up and like a bar area. You were allowed your two beer a day. It was just a nice place to go. Whereas the Airborne had nothing. The Airborne had two sections of canvas on the end of the kitchen. But there was nowhere to sit down except on folding chairs. It was just a totally different camp set-up. The Airborne is used to setting bivouacs up, short camps for 24 to 48 hours. We lived six months in a bivouac, whereas the RCDs set up a semi-permanent camp. So living conditions were extremely, extremely difficult. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

There was crowding and lack of privacy in the Commando camps although this was mediated by the fact that not all soldiers were in camp at all times. Privacy in one sense is merely an absence of crowding, but as a psychological

concept it is more than this. Privacy implies definite allocations of space for exclusive personal and private use with secure boundaries and territorial rights. Although each Commando was able to establish a clear territory this does not seem to have been the case for the individual soldier apart from a small area around his bunk. Pinch's (1994a: 112) study of CF peacekeepers states that an issue considered central to morale and well-being for soldiers involves accommodation and related arrangements in the field. It is also interesting to note that in 1 Commando, NCOs were bunked in with their men "in order to keep an eye on them" while in 2 Commando, the NCOs had their own tent away from the men. As in Petawawa, the lower ranks of 2 Commando were together and apart from the watchful eyes of officers.

Dream #3: The vision of Somalis

Detailed sessions on the culture and complex politics of Somalia were not an integral part of Airborne training prior to deployment. Handbooks covered Somali culture only superficially. This was probably due to the usual last minute scramble before the mission. According to Jockei (1994: 57): "Peacekeeping operations appear to be planned, appraised, analysed, guided, supported, governed as an ad hoc activity on each occasion they are mounted." But even if the information was gathered at the last minute, there was very little emphasis placed on intercultural training:

We had about an hour briefing on cultural awareness. I received a little booklet with little phrases, information on the climate, etc. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

We received very little cultural training before leaving for Somalia. Someone came and talked to us for about an hour. He had -worked there for some other organisation, and talked about the local culture. Later a group of Airborne people who had been to Somalia came and explained what the mission would be. I don't think that there was more than an hour of cultural training. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

We had an overview. It lasted about one hour, and I was given a booklet. That's it. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

The only briefing we had was that they were Muslim and that they had had a camp in '92, just general stuff, nothing about what the people are thinking. We knew nothing about them. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

Neither does there seem to have been any homogeneity to the information given to different groups. Each Commando was in charge of its own cultural training. Again, the atomized nature of the Airborne played itself out.

The Regiment laid on an overall list of items that the Commander wanted covered, and then each Commando broke it down and the training was up to them to go and prepare their different stands,

and it was up to them to do how they wanted to train for this (Testimony of MWO Mills, BOI Vol. IV: 822).

As mentioned above, some brief sessions on Somali culture and politics were held, but the training was uneven and soldiers were left with very little idea as to what to expect in theatre.

// 's like Mr. Smith goes to Africa, we didn 't know what to expect. There was tension because of the war, of course, but it was totally different from what we were led to expect. We saw people who were hungry, yeah, but not hundreds of thousands of people dying. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

Soldiers spent the large part of their time in learning how to use their vehicles, and in practical manoeuvres, such as practising protecting a food convoy. Non-combat training, that is cultural training, took the form of briefings aimed primarily at officers who were free to disseminate whatever information they wanted to their men. The information received on Somali culture was deemed inadequate by almost all of my interviewees.

A cursory look at the Somalia Handbook (DND 1992b: 21/21) that was handed out to troops confirms the fact that there simply wasn't enough to help them understand the situation that they were about to enter in Somalia. In the section "Dealing with the Locals," there are three parts that consist of perhaps six sentences in total. The Handbook told soldiers: "Some have proven to be very unpredictable even day to day; any locals with weapons must be considered as dangerous and potentially hostile on every encounter." The Handbook does not mention that, in fact, almost all Somali nomads carry weapons to protect their herds. "So if we were viewing any Somali with weapons as potentially dangerous and took a very defensive and hostile approach to that, we would have essentially been hostile toward any nomad out there because virtually all of them had weapons."(Menkhaus testimony to the Somalia Inquiry)

The Somalia Handbook also projects an idea of the Somali as potential threat, danger and perhaps enemy: "Yesterday's allies can turn on non-vigilant groups if it is in their interest and if they can get away with it. This is an unfortunate aspect of trust building in Somalia." This simple statement in the Handbook does hint at the unpredictability of a peacekeeping environment but fails to capture the complexity of the situation.

Our interviewees also saw the Somalis as dangerous and in addition they were led to believe that Somalis were somehow unclean, polluted. They were told not to touch them.

We were told to wear gloves if we were going to deal with them. Not because they were Black or anything else but because you don't know. You don't know what they have. There 's so much disease because of the unhygienic conditions. There was no running water. They used to drink, swim and go to the bathroom and throw their dead animals in the river water. And our system

just can't take the stuff that was in theirs. That was a big concern for everybody. Wear your gloves and watch what you touch. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

As a result, for Canadians getting ready for Somalia the media were the primary source of information. Interviews show that soldiers felt they had learned more from the Cable News Network (CNN) than from the briefings that they received from the military. However, the media gave the impression of "starving babies in Africa" and this did not coincide with reality. When the Canadian soldiers arrived in theatre, humanitarian assistance was already under way, and there were no longer starving masses for the soldiers to save.

We got little handbooks for Somalia and they did have a few classes, but it wasn't as detailed as I thought it should have been. But then I didn't really know what to expect either when I got over there. Actually the media had painted a false picture by the time our group got over there. Because all the starvation was now down to a minimum. They had started big food convoys by the time we got there. To me it didn't seem like they were starving as much as they showed on the pictures. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

Television gave us a pretty good indication of Somalia because nobody had actually been there before. A lot of the pictures they showed on TV were from a totally different area - some of the ones not even Somalia and it was six to eight months old, the film footage. So we got misguided information. It was totally different, what we were told and what we actually saw. (Canadian Airborne soldier)

Conclusions

On the eve of March 16, 1993 Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown allegedly tortured and beat Shidane Arone. Bendfeldt-Zachrisson's (1985) research describes the mental preparation for torture which is done by emphasising the "non-humanness" of target groups who are seen as a threat to the common good and by education that emphasises loyalty to an organisation that will protect the individual and maintain secrecy. In Belet Huen infiltrators were regarded as a serious threat to security by some members of the Airborne. In addition, Kellman (1995: 21) writes that torturers believe they are engaged in some higher purpose and they come to see themselves as playing an important role in the protection of the common good. Certainly, some members of the Airborne believed that Somali infiltrators needed to be "taught a lesson" so they would stop coming into the Canadian camp.

Somalis were also dehumanised through the use of such derogatory terminology as "smufty," "nig nog," etc. According to Kellman (1989: 19) labels help deprive the victim of identity.¹⁵ Kellman (1989: 15) also tells us that

15 For details on the dehumanisation of victims see Grossman 1995.

there is a relationship between frustration and aggression. Situationally induced frustration toward the target contributes heavily to violence, but it does so largely by dehumanising the victim. "Through dehumanisation, the actors' attitudes toward the target and toward themselves become so structured that it is neither necessary nor possible for them to view the relationship in moral terms." Similarly, Crelinsten and Schmid (1995: 9) observe that "the dehumanisation of the out-group" is one of the conditions under which torture is likely to occur. Kellman also states that "the main source of dehumanisation of the victims is their designation as enemies—" (1995: 31). Grossman (1995: 160) has described the emotional distance necessary for torture to occur and has listed levels of emotional withdrawal which include cultural distance (racial and ethnic difference which permit the killer to dehumanise the victim) and moral distance (the intense belief in moral superiority and in the Tightness of vengeful action).¹⁶

In terms of the final criteria above (education that emphasises loyalty to an organisation that will protect the individual and maintain secrecy) we have observed that 2 Commando subculture which was hyperinvested in an aggressive rebel identity with strong antipathy for out-groups. In addition to fierce commando loyalty, there was a tradition of protecting each other, which was encouraged by the regimental system. At CFB Petawawa, in-group loyalty was so strong that authorities were unable to find out who had participated in the car burning incidents. Investigations only encountered a wall of silence concerning a serious breach of discipline. By assuring anonymity through norms of group loyalty, acts of subversion and defiance were facilitated. It would also seem that the mistreatment of Somali prisoners had occurred earlier, prior to March 16th, and these acts had not been sanctioned. Although impossible to know, Clayton Matchee might have felt that he was operating in a permissive atmosphere where his acts were somehow "unofficially" approved. It seems clear that some members of 2 Commando believed that it was OK to beat up a Somali infiltrator in order to "teach him a lesson".

If all the factors described in this study contributed to the torture of Shidane Arone, why did some members of the Airborne behave as humanitarians and quiet professionals and others not? Hyperinvestment in a group identity leads to strong in-group/out-group tendencies which in turn can be expressed in varying forms of aggression. Nevertheless, it is important to note that discipline and leadership can offset strong group identification. Thus, a truly elite unit with a strong sense of professionalism and discipline would, in fact, be less likely to commit aggressive acts against members of the out-group. This is because the individuals are invested in an identity which has components of self-discipline and ethics embedded in it.

¹⁶ Israeli research indicates that the risk of death for a kidnap victim is much greater if the victim is hooded. According to Grossman, (1995:161) cultural distance is another form of emotional hooding that can work just as effectively.

In the best of all worlds, Canadian military ethos prescribes this self-discipline and ethical code for all soldiers and officers. Nevertheless, personal discipline, self-control and commitment to high standards of personal conduct need to be continually reinforced. The cultivation of aggressive behaviour needs to be balanced with respect for authority and the rule of law. Priorities need to be clearly established within the regimental collective and within individual units so a healthy balance of loyalties is firmly established. The role of leadership in this is clear. "Leaders are the primary agents by which an organization's culture and role norms are modelled, transmitted, and maintained" (Schein 1985).

What constitutes valid and useful non-traditional training for peace support missions? Suffice to say that a mix of generic and mission-specific training beyond GPCT seems to be required. Peacekeeping soldiers require an understanding of the peacekeeper's roles and responsibilities; they must learn advanced techniques of negotiation and conflict resolution to be effective; the diversity of their assignments demands sensitivity to issues of intercultural relations; they require an appreciation of the full gamut of UN procedures affecting such matters as the establishment of buffer zones, the supervision and monitoring of cease-fires, and the protection of humanitarian relief efforts. The modern peacekeeper must know how to establish and maintain law and order, impose crowd control, conduct searches, and handle detainees, while at the same time lending assistance to relief efforts and co-operating with humanitarian agencies. These general skills must be supplemented by an acquired knowledge of the language, culture, geography, history, and political background of the theatre of operations.

Despite an apparent sensitivity to the need to establish an appropriate tone and attitude for training preparations and the mission, the CAR did not succeed in ensuring that these were in fact conveyed to, and adopted by, personnel at all levels within the unit. At least some components within the CAR remained overly aggressive in their conduct and bearing during training exercises. Eleventh-hour attempts to instil an orientation appropriate for peace support missions cannot counterbalance years of combat-oriented socialisation.