

Crisis to Catalyst: The Strategic Effects of the Somalia Affair on the Canadian Armed Forces

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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Additionally, I am particularly grateful for the support of my wife, Zoe Ann Cooper. Without her editorial acumen, grammatical precision and continued support to my academic efforts, this work would not have been accomplished.

Errors are mine alone.

Acronyms

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
CA	Canadian Army
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CAR	Canadian Airborne Regiment
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
CJFS	Canadian Joint Force Somalia
CPAC	Canadian Public Affairs Channel
CO	Commanding Officer
DGPA	Director General Public Affairs
DND	Department of National Defence
JAG	Judge Advocate General
MND	Minister of National Defence
MP	Military Police
MMC	Minister's Monitoring Committee
MRL	Media Response Line
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PM	Prime Minister
ROE	Rules-of-Engagement
SILT	Somalia Inquiry Liaison Team
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
VCDS	Vice Chief of Defence Staff

Figure

Figure 1.1	The Elements of the Somalia Affair	2
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Map

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In 1992, the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) (roughly analogous to a US

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1. The Canadian Airborne Regiment was the sole airborne unit in the Canadian Army (CA), and was actually only of battalion size. Unique in the CA, the Regiment was actually a composite formed of members from each of Canada's three Regular Force infantry regiments; each with their own sub-unit sized "Commando." The regular force infantry regiments which contributed infantry to the Regiment were The Royal Canadian Regiment (3 Commando), The Royal 22nd Regiment (or "Van Doos" who formed 1 Commando) and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2 Commando). Most regiments train their own personnel once they have completed Basic Training; the Canadian Airborne Regiment was different in that all members took their basic infantry training at another regiment's Battle School and served time with their parent regiment before joining the Canadian Airborne Regiment. For a comprehensive treatment of the Regiment's organization and history see Bernd Horn and Michel Wyczynski,

(St Catherines, Ontario: Vanwell, 2001), 101-214.

2. Examples of previous crisis in the Canadian civil-military relationship include the two conscription crises during the First and Second World Wars, and the actions of the Royal Canadian Navy during the Cuban Missile Crisis when they deployed in contravention of the orders of the Diefenbaker Government.

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3. Douglas L. Bland, "The Government of Canada and the Armed Forces: A Troubled Relationship," in

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10. As shown by his suggestion that his telephone calls were being recorded and monitored from the time he had been appointed to the Commission. Desbarats,

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in this work.

12. Professor Donna Winslow has studied and written extensively on the Canadian Airborne Regiment and the Somalia mission. A full list of sources consulted is in the bibliography, however interested parties can refer to her "Between Dream and Reality:

the Canadian Mission to Somalia," in 7 L H J L 6 W L Y H [P V U Z) L [^ L L U 7 L H
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 Group Bonding in the Canadian Airborne," (Y T L K - V Y J L Z : V J P L [' , Volume 25, N
 70 : W Y P U N 5 , 5 - ! 8 6 1 8 9 O V Y , * H U H K P H U : V J P L ' H U K O [Z (Y T ' Q , * H U H K P H U 4
 1 V \ Y U H S , Winter 2003-2004 (2004): 11-24.

13. Three examples of this nature of scholarship are Grant Dawson, , / L Y L P Z / L S S ! , * H
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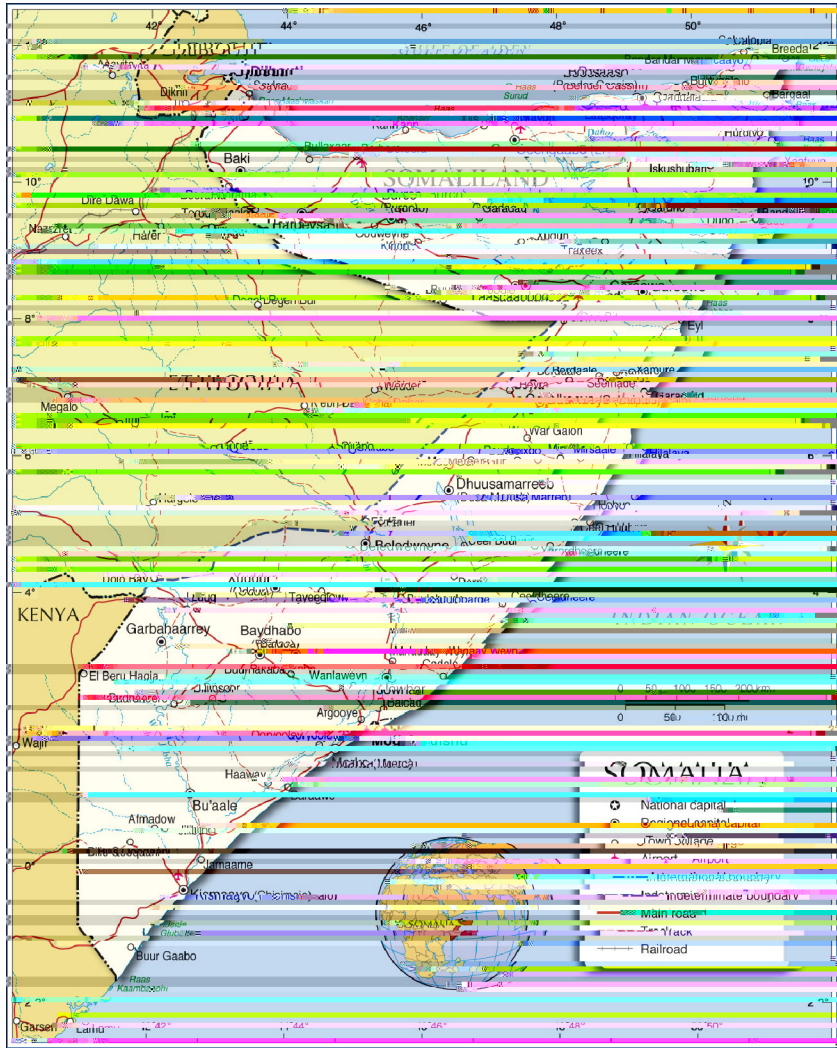
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The de Faye Inquiry and Courts-Martial

Major-General Tom de Faye and his team began their work before the redeployment of the Regiment to Canada. Their mandate was to investigate “the leadership, discipline, operations, actions and procedures” of the Regiment. Additionally, latitude was given to investigate “the Battle Group’s antecedents in Canada and higher headquarters in Somalia prior to and during its employment in Somalia.”¹ Almost immediately a jurisdictional issue arose – how to deal with potential criminal acts and those already under Military Police investigations. This caused the then-CDS, Admiral John Anderson, to order that the board-of-inquiry (BOI) be split into two phases. Phase 1 was to deal with

portray the incidents as “isolated,” but the gathered media did not accept the

As then-Colonel Rick Hillier later described, “The credibility of the [de Faye] Board of Inquiry took a beating, and, along with it, so did the entire a public inquiry were heard.⁵ DND’s response to the challenges that Somalia issues posed was to establish “the Somalia Working Group,” in September 1993 under the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) for Policy and Communications, Major-General Jean Boyle. The group was charged with coordinating DND’s response to Somalia related issues, and in particular “advising the MND, CDS and DM [Deputy Minister] on future actions to be taken.”⁶ Politically, the dynamics of the Affair changed in October when Kim Campbell and the Conservatives were defeated in a landslide victory for the Liberal party under Jean Chrétien, who subsequently appointed David Collenette as MND.⁷ That December, Admiral Anderson retired – to be replaced as CDS by General John de Chastelain.⁸

Concurrent with preparation and release of the de Faye report, disciplinary investigations and subsequent courts-martial took place, keeping the incidents in Somalia in full view of the Canadian public between 1993 and 1996.⁹ The potential inconsistencies between the courts-martial and the content of the de al Jean Boyle, in his capacity as head of the Somalia Working Group, initially raised this fact in October 1993 after reviewing the de Faye Report.¹⁰ While public interest continued through the spring of 1994, owing to the ongoing courts-martial, Boyle wrote an “after-action report” with the intent of highlighting unresolved problems to the CDS, where the risks were clearly articulated that:

[de Faye] report before it was released to the public would eventually become publicly available through the testimony at the courts martial of

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⁶SCR 1993, Forged to Change, 9
⁷Forced to Change, 9
⁸A Soldier First, 2
⁹Forced to Change, 9
¹⁰Forced to Change, 9

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⁹A National Force, 21
¹⁰The Somalia Affair, 36
¹¹The Somalia Affair, 36
¹²Forced to Change, 9

soldiers involved in incidents in Somalia... there were weaknesses and...

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dations... some of the de Faye board's conclusions... did not appear
to be borne out by the testimony actually heard... leadership problems
reached up the chain of command to Command CFJS. He referred to
documents that indicated "direct attempts to cover up facts behind the
4 March incident, which will no doubt be brought to light during court
proceedings. Also the 16 March incident reveals a blatant attempt at the
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corps.'"¹¹

In retrospect, it seems obvious that the courts-martial would inform the Canadian public, and its soldiers, as to what had occurred in Somalia. While it seems incredible that Boyle's warning was required, it bears remembering that the evolving media environment was a new phenomenon and no other Canadian deployment had ever experienced similar scrutiny. Of equal importance to the information that would become public knowledge however, were the conduct and outcomes of the trials themselves. With Master Corporal Matchee found incapable of standing trial as a result of his attempted suicide and as-
V R F L D W H G S H U P D Q H Q W E U D L Q G D P D J H W K H
Kyle Brown.¹²

While the particulars of the trials are beyond the scope of this paper, three
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ment, and negative aspects of their actions in Somalia, in the public conscious-
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as the incidents of March 1993 emerged, the media reported on developments
as they occurred.¹³ Second, the trials themselves contributed to a distrust of the
military justice system primarily because only Private Brown was found guilty

determined, the lighter the sentence. This is readily evident in the fact that Lieutenant-Colonel Mathieu was repeatedly found not guilty on the charge of negligent performance of a military duty, and Major Seward – who gave the order to abuse intruders – initially received a “severe reprimand” as sentence

Video Release and Disbandment

Scott Taylor, a journalist and former Canadian soldier, had observed the fallout and periodically commented in editorials of *Esprit de Corps* magazine in 1994.

At some point, Taylor acquired a copy of a videotape made by the soldiers of 2 Commando while in Somalia: a video in which Private Brown could be seen behaving in a normal, and markedly quiet manner when compared against the displays of bravado and commentary of his fellow paratroopers. Underestimating how the video could be interpreted and distressed by the injustice to which he viewed Brown as being subjected, he arranged to share the video with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).²¹ Sections from the tape were aired on the nightly news on 15 January 1995.²²

A media frenzy erupted followed the airing. Images of a black-faced Canadian soldier, racial slurs, and overt racism were what the Canadian public saw and took away from the three-minute clip on the nightly news. As Martha Armstrong described the situation, “The next day, the story was everywhere, and not as Taylor had envisioned. The soldiers’ racist and violent comments were the focus...[rather than] absolving Brown and exposing the military’s leadership failings.”²³ Worse was to come.

Within days, existence of a second video became known. Filmed during an initiation ceremony that took place before the Regiment had deployed to Somalia, it depicted “a group of drunken soldiers from 1 Commando vomiting, eating something indistinguishable and vomiting again, doing push-ups, and urinating on other soldiers.”²⁴ Contents from the video were broadcast nationally on 18 January 1995. Repercussions were swift. The Canadian public was an investigation.²⁵ Politically, the reaction was without precedent in Canadian military history.

On 24 January 1995, Minister Collenette announced, against the advice of the CDS, that the Regiment would be disbanded.²⁶ The rationale was predominantly political, but included ethical and cultural factors as well – the leadership failures were anathema to Canadian values. As historian Dan Loomis

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²¹ *Scapegoat*, 200
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²² *Sunday Report*, 1995
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²³ *The Somalia Affair*, 1995
C R N B

noted, “Any credibility the [Regiment] may have been left with was lost in the eyes of the public along with its political leadership. This spelled the end of the [Regiment].”²⁷

V L J Q L ¿ F D Q W D Q G E U R D G Z L W K W K H L U W H U P

inquire into and report on the chain of command system, leadership within the chain of command, discipline, operations, actions and decisions of the Canadian Forces and the actions and decisions of the Department of National Defence in respect to the Canadian Forces deployment to Somalia and...matters related to the pre-deployment, in-theatre and post-deployment phases of the Somalia deployment.³⁴

The Commission began by organizing into three broad components, each Z L W K L W V R Z Q W D V N V W K D W D L P H G W R P H H V
 ence – investigation, research and hearings.³⁵ The investigative component's goal was to sort through over 150,000 documents and interview “hundreds of potential witnesses” in an effort to ascertain a factual basis on which to judge events and decisions.³⁶ The research component, working largely behind the scenes, undertook “an exhaustive comparative assessment of rules and policies affecting military operations and decision making.”³⁷ The third, most visible component, was the conduct of public hearings, where witnesses were inter-

CDS General Boyle.⁴³

While much has been written on the perceived bias and hostility with which the Commission treated some witnesses, acting more like a criminal court than an inquiry, it is several activities internal to the CAF and DND that merit comment here.⁴⁴ Given the volume of documents required for the Commission to complete its task, an imperative existed for an agency within DND empowered to respond to, and to coordinate with, the Commission.⁴⁵ In response the Department created the Somalia Inquiry Liaison Team (SILT), which worked for the Associate ADM (Policy & Communications) – Major-General Boyle.⁴⁶ From the outset, the working relationship between the SILT and the Commission was poor; perceptions by the Commission of the SILT's intransigence and/or incompetence made it worse.

Response Lines” (MRLs). When the media used access to information protocols requesting RTQs on a given subject they were then informed that none existed.⁵¹ Additionally, there is documented evidence of attempted destruction
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relationship, and trust, between the public, the media, and the Commission on one hand, and the CAF on the other, continued to erode owing to a demonstrated inability to exercise leadership in an ethical fashion.

In December 1995, General de Chastelain retired from the CAF, being replaced by newly-promoted General Boyle.⁵³ Handling the Somalia Affair
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he shut down all training and operations across the CAF, ordering a detailed search for missing documents.⁵⁴ , Q PLG \$XJXVW KH WHVWL¿H
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mendations as to how to improve Canada's military justice system.⁶⁰ Separately, Young examined broader military reform.

Using the services of four noted Canadian academics, Albert Legault, Jack Granatstein, Desmond Morton, and David Bercuson, he began creating his own report with the goal of shaping the evolution of the CAF before the Somalia
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ership development and enhancing intellectual capacity within the CAF. These
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the ability of the CAF to be attuned to the larger society it served.⁶¹ By the end
of March 1997, Young had completed his work and submitted it to the Prime
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energize and guide the evolution of the CAF over the coming years.⁶² Three
months later, the Somalia Commission submitted its report to the Canadian
government. Its 1,500 pages included 157 recommendations, many of which
would be implemented to a greater or lesser degree.⁶³ However, the primary
driver for change was ultimately The Young Report.

With the delivery of the two reports the Somalia Affair concluded. Vice-Admiral Murray acted as CDS for less time than General Boyle.⁶⁴ His own mark-
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subsequently removed from the position in the summer of 1997.⁶⁵ Doug Young, who had expected to be able to push his reforms through the CAF after the Affair had ended, lost his seat in the federal election that spring. He was replaced by Art Eggleton as MND, who then oversaw the implementation of the reforms proposed by The Young Report.

On Effects

Possessing an understanding of elements of the Somalia Affair, it is worth

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the scope of this monograph, note must be made that elements of the CA were
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dals did not result in either public inquiries or formal, mandated changes to
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Col Tod Strickland

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basis.¹⁴ ,W LV LQWHUHVWLQJ WR QRWH WKDW WK
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profession considerable scope for self-regulation to ensure professional
effectiveness.²⁴

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argues that owing to the nature of the strategic level, with its requirements for
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to the incidents in Somalia were carried out, and their reporting within the
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disheartening and did nothing to bridge the gap between the soldiers and their
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control over the evolution of its profession, and one of the positive legacies of
the Somalia Affair. With the publication of The Young Report, the civilian side
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²⁶National Defence Headquarters Centre for Decision: a Study Prepared for the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia
²⁷Forced to Change, 5

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future to cope with the ever-more sophisticated demands of its profession.²⁸ All

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The Young Report contained a hundred recommendations on all manner of
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tem, education, ethics and values, and leadership. ,Q WKH ODVW WKU

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for all those who wished to be commissioned within the Canadian Forces.³¹

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1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the importance of using reliable sources and ensuring the accuracy of the information gathered.

3. The third part of the document provides a detailed analysis of the data collected, identifying trends and patterns. It discusses the implications of these findings and offers recommendations for future research and action.

4. The final part of the document concludes the study and summarizes the key findings. It reiterates the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

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