

[ORIGINAL DRAFT CHAPTER FOR RCAC History]

Sean M. Maloney, PhD

Chapter 17: The Cold War (II), 1954-1970

The RCAC, NATO, and the Nuclear Battlefield

As nuclear weapons got smaller in size and yield and became more prolific, it was clear to Canadian doctrine makers that they would eventually be employed on the battlefield, both by NATO and by the Soviet forces. Forward-thinking men like Major General J.M. Rockingham concluded that a great deal of experimentation was required so that the Canadian Army could meet the new battlefield conditions. This in turn led to the STAR series of division-level exercises held at Camp Gagetown between 1955 and 1959. Camp Gagetown itself was specially constructed for this purpose. RCAC training was generally conducted at the RCAC School at Camp Borden, with gunnery and tactical training held at Camp Meaford's ranges. Gagetown allowed for unit and formation manoeuvre in a simulated nuclear environment so that operational skills could be developed and retained. These large divisional exercises were always augmented with Militia armoured units in the Enemy Force role. For example, Ex 'Eastern Star' (1957) included a 'Fantasian Tank Force' which included 12 Sherman tanks manned by personnel from the 2/8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's), the Prince Edward Island Regiment, and the Halifax Rifles, to confound 'Blueland' in its endeavours to contain Fantasianism.

Similarly, manoeuvres like Ex 'Battle Royal' (1954) demonstrated the potential effects of nuclear weapons on battlefield operations in the European environment. On that exercise, 'D' Sqn LdSH, as part of 1 CIBG, formed an ad hoc counter-penetration force to exploit 'nuclear blasts' directed against enemy forces, once those enemy forces were identified through recce means. In addition Canadian officers of Colonel, Brigadier and General ranks regularly observed live nuclear tests in Nevada, USA and Maralinga, Australia so that they could gain an appreciation of physical effects of the new weapons.

Canadian participation in the STAR series and the NATO exercises demonstrated that dispersion prevented targeting units with nuclear weapons, while mobility was critical for the forces to regroup from the dispersed posture in order to counterattack once the

weapons had been used. Static defensive positions were a liability to all concerned. This dictated that the infantry units had to be (ideally) mechanized with armoured personnel carriers or (at least) motorized in trucks, and that the number of tanks had to be increased. Tanks would now lead, not just back up the infantry. Tanks would not be grouped into a separate brigade, since this would concentrate too much firepower in one place. Consequently, orders were given to form two additional tank regiments so that each brigade group could possess one. Consequently, the 1/8th Canadian Hussars (Princess Louise's) (later redesignated 8 CH) and the Fort Garry Horse (FGH) were formed in 1957 and 1958 respectively. This brought the number of Regular regiments up to four, all equipped with Centurion Mk.V.

The nuclear battlefield placed great premium on agility. The infantry had to be mounted in APCs, but an APC acquisition programme would not come to fruition until the 1960s. Agility also demanded that the commander have as much information in a timely a fashion. Each brigade group now boasted a Recce Squadron equipped with the two-man Ferret Mk. I scout cars, 124 of which were purchased by Canada between 1954 and 1957. Operating in four seven-car troops, the brigade's eyes and ears were everywhere 'sneaking and peeking', developing information which would in turn be used by the tank-infantry teams to canalize enemy armoured forces into killing zones, where they would be dispatched with nuclear weapons prior to the counterattack with the Centurions leading the charge through the irradiated blast area and vapourized enemy armoured units. Each armoured regiment now had four squadrons: three tank and one recce.

Life in Germany was busy for the RCAC units stationed there. The new doctrine had to be implemented and assimilated, with a great many handicaps not the least was the lack of full mechanization. Espionage activities were directed at the Canadian Brigade Group and frequent practice alerts were held which mobilized the Brigade and sent it forward part way to its planned defensive positions. Things were tense, particularly in the inner German border regions. The annual fall exercises, usually held at the Corps-level, were widespread and exciting affairs, with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of allied armoured vehicles manoeuvring around the plains of Westphalia.

The Militia's role in Canada's strategic concept during the 1950s remained relatively static. As we will recall, from 1945 to 1953 the Militia was organized to provide four infantry divisions, two armoured divisions, and two independent armoured brigades after mobilization. Militia RCAC units on the 1950 Order of Battle included twenty-four tank and five armoured car regiments. Militia RCAC units trained on Shermans, M5 Stuart

light tanks and Staghound armoured cars. The tank units usually possessed between six and ten Shermans, plus spares and, occasionally, a RCEME increment.

Local headquarters training was conducted using the remnants of decaying Second World War training facilities, while some units acquired and constructed their own driving ranges. For example, the British Columbia Regiment (Duke of Connaught's Own) paraded in Vancouver, and used the Boundary Bay airfield for troop training with its Shermans. The 8th New Brunswick Hussars (Princess Louise's) used the remains of Camp Sussex, including the old tank hanger. Many units received training from Regular force units at annual camps at Wainwright, Meaford, Gagetown, and Petawawa and, as already noted, participated in 1st Canadian Infantry Division exercises.

By 1954, Army HQ scrapped the Militia's divisional structure, in part due to the low turn out (some units were at 17% strength, with the entire Militia fielding 42 000 men in 1956). The initial plan to turn the Militia into a partially trained manpower pool was implemented, but resistance from the armoured and artillery units (and their sponsors and patrons) resulted in their retention and organization as field units. The mobilization requirement, grudgingly retained by Army HQ, was reduced to three infantry divisions, one armoured division and two armoured brigades. Consequently, there were some amalgamations. For example, in 1958 the 6th Duke of Connaught's Royal Canadian Hussars and the 17th Duke of York's Royal Canadian Hussars became the Royal Canadian Hussars (Montreal). In other cases, the PEIR and the SALH absorbed light anti-aircraft artillery units, while the Algonquin Regiment and the Grey and Simcoe Forresters were converted from infantry to armoured regiments.

There was, however, not enough modern equipment with which to fully equip mobilized RCAC Militia units despite the additional Centurions purchased, nor were there any serious mobilization or realistic strategic deployment plans produced by Army HQ. In any event, there was a paucity of strategic sealift as the Canadian merchant marine declined during the St Laurent Government's tenure.

Operation RAPID STEP: The Suez Crisis and UNEF I, 1956-1967

The most dangerous international crisis of the 1950s was the Suez Crisis of 1956. The British and French mounted an amphibious operation to re-take the Suez Canal from the Egyptians, who had defaulted on agreements over access and funding and nationalized it. This in turn prompted the Soviet Union to threaten to use nuclear weapons against Paris and London if the landing force did not withdraw. Apart from the North Atlantic Treaty

Article 5 (an attack against one is an attack against all), the Canal and the Eastern Mediterranean were critical to NATO strategy in the event of war with the Warsaw Pact. At the same time, through secret negotiations with the British and French, the Israelis took advantage of the situation and rolled the Egyptian Army back from the Gaza Strip to the Suez Canal. Peace hung in the balance as the Soviets prepared airborne forces to intervene and confront the Anglo-French and Israeli forces.

Canada had been involved in peace observation since 1948 when Canadian officers were deployed as part of United Nations Military Observer Group India-Pakistan (UNMOGIP) (Incidentally, the first Canadian soldier to die on UN duty was Brigadier H.H. Angle of the British Columbia Dragoons who was killed in a plane crash in 1950). RCAC officers also served with the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (UNTSO) which was formed in 1948 to supervise the Arab-Israeli truces. In 1954, Canadian General E.L.M. "Tommy" Burns, who commanded II Canadian Corps in Italy, was nominated to command UNTSO. Burns had in 1955 recommended to a number of high-level UN officials that a UN armoured division be formed in the Sinai to keep the peace ("UNTSO is merely a policeman without a truncheon!" he once remarked). He was overruled by UN HQ. In 1956, he then proposed the formation of a United Nations Emergency Force as a solution to the Suez Crisis. Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. "Mike" Pearson enthusiastically adopted the idea and pushed it in UN circles to resolve the crisis.

The Canadian contingent to UNEF, formed in November-December 1956, consisted mostly of service support units since the UN developed a somewhat craven attitude when dealing with Egyptian leader Colonel Nasser, who refused to allow a Canadian infantry battalion in UNEF. A compromise was reached whereby Yugoslavia and Canada would each provide an armoured reconnaissance squadron equipped with armoured cars. Consequently, Army HQ formed a composite unit called 56 Reconnaissance Squadron which was part of Operation RAPID STEP, the Canadian portion of the UNEF deployment.

Led by Major R.B. Tackaberry, RCD, the first deployment of 56 Reconnaissance Squadron consisted of 6 officers and 92 men drawn from RCD and LdSH. It was organized as a traditional Ferret squadron with four troops of seven UN-emblazoned white painted scout cars each. 56 Reconnaissance Squadron arrived in Port Said on 26 March 1957 after protracted negotiations. Meanwhile, Yugoslav M-8 Greyhounds closely followed the Israeli army back across the Sinai deserts to the Armistice Demarcation Line (ADL) and the International Frontier (IF) after the infantry units interposed themselves between the Egyptians and the Anglo-French force and saw them off. UNEF established an observation post (OP) line which extended all along the ADL and IF. The Israelis would not allow UNEF to operate on

Israeli-controlled territory, which meant that UNEF was based totally in Egyptian territory and thus subject to Nasser's whims.

For example (and shades of future problems with UNPROFOR in the former Yugoslavia), 56 Recce Sqn was forbidden to deploy the new ground radar sets or searchlights, which would have enhanced UNEF's surveillance capability in the desert. In many cases, Egyptian roadblocks attempted to shake down Canadian convoys which led to an informal drill of "approach roadblock, cock Sterling SMG pointing out the driver's window with one hand while continuing to drive with the other through the roadblock." On the other side of the line, the Israeli plan was to discredit UNEF's impartiality. For example, the IDF's NCO School female class would 'patrol' the ADL/IF and entice UNEF soldiers into taking fresh fruit and other amenities. Photographs would be taken and then used against the UN.

56 Recce Sqn and its successors were initially tasked to patrol and establish roadblocks along the ADL in Gaza and later along the IF south of Rafah. Conducting patrols in the Sinai was physically demanding, particularly for the Ferret crews, who eventually turned in their scout cars for American-pattern jeeps mounted with .30 cal machine guns. The sun slammed down like a hammer during the day, while the desert dropped to winter temperatures at night. Sandstorms paralyzed patrol operations and flies swarmed around soldiers when they were eating. Annoying fauna included huge camel spiders, snakes, and pesky scorpions, which would sometimes climb into boots at night to keep warm and surprise the owner in the morning. Operating in the Gaza Strip could be demoralizing, with the attendant incompetent UN administration, terrorism, crushing poverty and lack of modern sanitation. Unlike today's six-month peacekeeping tours, Canadian armoured soldiers did one year tours with UNEF.

Typical incidents over the ten years of UNEF's existence revolved around constant ADL/IF violations by belligerent patrols as well as hide-and-seek games with Bedouin nomads and smugglers. Verbal threats were made to "kill all UN patrols" by Egyptian officers. In many cases, automatic weapons fire was directed at UNEF patrols and OPs. Camels were kidnapped. Nocturnal theft was rampant. In one case a Canadian junior officer was attacked by a sword-wielding Bedouin.

It was not all without cost. In addition to the other threats encountered, there were mines. 56 Recce Sqn lost Tpr R.E. McDavid, Tpr R.H. Allan, while the RCD lost Cpl G.A. Gauthier, and the LdSH Tpr R.J. Wiley. In November 1964, Cpl P.R. Wallace and Tpr A.A. Bons from 8 CH were ordered into a suspected minefield to retrieve a wayward Bedouin and his camel. Their jeep struck a mine and both men were killed.

Fortunately, RCAC units missed out on the ignominious UNEF evacuation in 1967. UN Headquarters 'reorganized' UNEF and eliminated the requirement for the recce squadron. Some believe that this was due to Egyptian pressure because the units were 'too impartial' (the Yugoslav unit was generally considered to be partial towards Egypt and did not report on the Egyptian build-up). In any event, Nassar, wanting to get another crack at Israel, ordered the rest of Canadian contingent out knowing that the Canadians formed the backbone of the formation. The Egyptian armed forces paid for this folly during the Six Day War of 1967 and they lost the Sinai to Israel's Blitzkrieg. This eventually led to the more dangerous 1973 Yom Kippur War and a confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union that threatened to go nuclear.

Snakes and Ladders: The National Survival Role

The role of the RCAC Militia units dramatically altered after the Diefenbaker Government was elected in 1957. The following year inaugurated the National Survival concept, derisively known by Militia units as "Snakes and Ladders" after the children's game. Ostensibly, the Government believed that in a nuclear war, the Soviets would target population centres in Canada during the initial phases of a conflict. Since there would be so much disruption during this first phase, there would be no time for mobilization and the existing deployed forces in Europe would have to fight on their own. After the initial attack, the population trapped in devastated cities would have to be rescued and infrastructure restored so that continuity of government and society could be retained. Then the reserve forces could be mobilized and deployed overseas to fight. This was the accepted strategic concept.

This legitimate concept was then used for a multitude of purposes never intended by its creators. Many in the Diefenbaker Government wanted to effect savings to meet election promises and to cater to legitimate public concern over the possibility of nuclear warfare. Some in Army HQ saw the Militia and thus their patrons as political impediments and wanted it removed so that scarce money could then be applied to what were seen as more vital projects. The RCAF was at the time clamouring for more money for the CF-105 Avro Arrow interceptor, and the Royal Canadian Navy wanted more anti-submarine destroyers and submarine-hunting helicopters. Still others, some sincere others self-interested, thought that the Militia could be converted into a nation-wide fire brigade to handle the so-called 're-entry operations' in the irradiated rubble of Canadian urban centres. Others wanted to construct new political and economic empires around the fallout shelter and 'Diefenbunker' continuity of government programmes.

Eventually Army HQ's Report on the Militia 1957 recommended the conversion of the Militia to a National Survival organization. Militia units would form the training and leadership nuclear for a vast civil defence organization, expressed through Re-Entry Columns made up of civilian volunteers. For example, the Elgin Regiment's Shermans were taken away and the regiment was tasked with training two 550-man mobile search and rescue columns. The British Columbia Dragoons were ordered to hand in their heavy weapons and focus on Green Line and Red Line (boundary of the irradiated zone) reconnaissance missions.

Generally, the concept of National Survival operations consisted of determining the general locations of devastation through recce operations, monitoring fallout, picqueting the target zone, and then conducting re-entry operations to rescue the population. Naturally, re-entry units had special maintenance of law and order powers which would have shaken the very souls of civil libertarians.

Initially, Militia units were ecstatic about the numbers of people lining up at the armouries to sign up. However, as the XII Manitoba Dragoons history noted, the six-week paid course was filled with "many farmers joining the ranks to take advantage of the extra money to supplement their incomes." At the same time, the Diefenbaker Government implemented a Military Training Plan which the British Columbia Regiment history notes was essentially "a 'make-work project for the jobless administered by the Militia and paid for using scarce Militia dollars."

What could RCAC Militia units do under such assaults? Not all units were forced to turn in their Shermans. Those that did and were converted to re-entry recce organizations found that they could retain their traditional recce skills by ostensibly doing 'Green Line' recce exercises which really amounted to the same type of Sector recce mission that would be used in war. The BCR and BCDs became quite adept at this on several exercises in held in the BC interior. Some Sherman-equipped units like the Queen's York Rangers (1st American) in Toronto were able to keep the more dubious National Survival training at arm's length and just not tell Area HQ what was really going on. Over time Militia RCAC units figured out how to adapt to Snakes and Ladders and still retain armoured skills. Some time with the block and tackle would be put in at the National Survival Village at Camp Gagetown for visibility purposes by the Maritime-based armoured units like the PEIR and 8 CH(M), but the bulk of the summer training period was reserved for crewman and troop tactics.

It is easy to deride National Survival: it distracted armoured units from their primary tasks (to train, mobilize and fight) and caused tremendous damage to the individual Militia units and the Militia as an institution. The inability of Army HQ to seriously plan

for mobilization and then deny funds to ensure mobilization's viability must take equal blame, however, alongside National Survival. It is ironic that actual air defence intelligence and plans for the 1957 to 1967 period indicated that the Soviet's primary targets in North America were SAC bomber bases in the United States, secret SAC refueling bases in the Canadian Arctic and the air defence system, which was mostly in the Arctic, northern Ontario, and northern Quebec, sites well away from the major population centres. Had war occurred in the 1957-1967 period, it is likely that fallout would have been a greater problem for Canadians than outright destruction of the urban areas.

From Nucs to COIN and LIC

The election of the Pearson Government in 1963 and the accession of Paul Hellyer as Minister of National defence are usually cited as reasons why the RCAC regular force units altered their composition in the 1960s. These events were only part of a larger Canadian response to the changing strategic environment. The NATO strategic concept of presenting an effective conventional-nuclear deterrent force in NATO's Central Region and on its peripheries generated a stable and static standoff. The Germany-based RCAC units with 4 Canadian Infantry Brigade Group, its predecessors and successors, were part of that system. The stability in the Central Region prevented the enemy from achieving his objectives in Western Europe: therefore, he then attempted to outflank and disrupt other areas of critical import to the West. These areas included most of the Third World and the methods employed were indirect. Known at the time as 'brushfire wars' or low intensity conflicts (LIC), the preferred generic Western response was Counterinsurgency (COIN) of the type utilized by the French in Algeria, the British in its de-colonization conflicts in the far east, and by the Americans in the Vietnam War.

Canada had no former colonies threatened by Soviet-inspired and supported anarchy. The closest thing to a 'war of national liberation' was the FLQ conflict (described later in this chapter). UN Peacekeeping forces, however, had already been used as NATO surrogate forces in the Suez Crisis, the Congo, and elsewhere. Canada could best contribute to countering the instability generated by de-colonization and wars of national liberation by improving the ability of her land forces to deploy and operate in the Third World, particularly in the peacekeeping role. By flexibly responding to global crisis points, the nuclear threshold could be kept low. If the opposition chose to increase the

stakes and escalate, Western forces, be they in the NATO Area or not, would meet the escalation with whatever force was deemed appropriate.

Hellyer, among others, picked up on these developments and sought to effect change within the Army which was NATO Europe-focused. The medium was the 1964 White Paper which eventually led to the Integration and Unification of the Armed Forces. In the run up to the White Paper, however, a Hellyer-inspired land forces study generated ideas which would affect the RCAC and its role in the new strategic concept. This study recommended the conversion of the Canada-based brigade groups into an airportable divisional-sized formation. It would include several new types of units. For example, there would be a divisional "Armoured Regiment (Airportable)" and a "Reconnaissance Regiment (Airportable)" to accompany the three light infantry brigades which would be airborne or airmobile (helicopter-borne). The armoured regiment was to consist of 64 Sheridan light tanks equipped with the 152mm Shillelagh gun-missile system, while the reconnaissance regiment was to retain 29 Ferrets with .30 cal. machineguns.

These ideas were at odds with the Army Tactics and Organization Board (ATOB) which at the time was handling future concepts. ATOB was working on retaining a full mechanized division of three brigade groups for employment in Europe. In the ATOB vision, there would be two mechanized infantry brigades, each with one armoured regiment, and an armoured brigade with two armoured regiments, plus a divisional reconnaissance regiment. ATOB recommended a ratio of ten tanks per APC-borne infantry company; thus four tank squadrons per regiment, each consisting of four troops plus an RHQ reconnaissance troop. All the regiments, save the reconnaissance regiment, were to be equipped with Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), type to be determined, while the reconnaissance regiment was supposed to be equipped with a light amphibious tank.

The implementation of either study was disrupted by a combination of the creation of Mobile Command in 1965 and the disastrous effects of the 1964 federal budget (which had not been properly coordinated within the Pearson Government) which reduced the defence budget so that the 1964 White Paper could not be fully implemented. Thus, 4 Brigade in Germany was able to upgrade its Centurions (to include a 105mm L7 gun and infrared night fighting equipment) pending a replacement and eventually acquire enough M-113 APCs to mechanize its infantry. The Canada-based brigade groups were then formed into Mobile Command (while retaining most of their Centurion tanks!) and the Militia was left to hang on the vine.

This all set the stage for a number of events which had long term effects on the RCAC. The first of these was the Light Armoured Regiment concept. As with many ideas within the RCAC, this one was a combination of opinions. 2 CIBG in Petawawa was re-

designated the Special Service Force¹ in 1963. Its mission was to be the repository for two commitments: the ACE Mobile Force (Land) commitments (two battalion groups) and the UN Standby Battalion (one battalion group plus a recce squadron). The lack of direction emanating from the new Mobile command HQ meant that doctrinal development and organizational details for RCAC support to this LIC formation had to be done at the unit level.

Recce doctrine had, until this point, been based on stealth or 'sneak and peek' as it was known.² It was not possible to sneak and peep on UN operations because part of the mission was to be as visible as possible to the belligerents. The conclusions were that the Petawawa-based regiment with the SSF needed something more than Ferrets. Ferrets could not survive against Soviet-built T-34/85s or PT-76 amphibious recce tanks that Canada would encounter in the Third World. The requirements now included a tracked recce vehicle that was amphibious as well as a fire support vehicle so it could fight for information ('blow and go' or 'blast and pass') as well as sneak and peek. Provisional Light Armoured Regiment manuals projected that Sheridans would meet the tracked requirement.

Second was the need to acquire light armoured vehicles. A number of trials occurred almost simultaneously. The light concepts from Mobile Command HQ and those in Petawawa were hard to coordinate given the administrative confusion produced by Integration and Unification. At the same time, the cancellation of the Canadian-built Bobcat APC resulted in the decision to buy the M-113A1 APC series. A formal proposal to replace Ferret was approved. Trials on the Cadillac-Gage V-150 Commando were initiated, while at the same time trials started on the M-114 reconnaissance vehicle and what was then called the 'M-113 and a half', which mounted a 20mm cannon in a remote-controlled mount. Note that there were two complementary requirements: one for a tracked recce vehicle, the other for a wheeled vehicle. In 1967, the Government announced that 175 M-113 and a half vehicles would be bought. They would be called Lynx, but would never get the 20mm cannon: a .50 cal machine gun would have to suffice, to the confusion of the first crew commanders who saw stickers on the cupolas and manuals for employment of the 20mm. 20mm development was delayed in part because of the Canadian Army's attempt to produce a 20mm depleted uranium munition

¹. 2 CIBG's evolution went from 2 CIBG(1962) to SSF (1963) to 2 CIBG again under Mobile Command (1966), then 2 Combat Group (1969), and then the SSF again in 1976. The original SSF of the 1960s did not make pretensions to being a home of special operating forces.

². Sometimes called 'sneak and peep.'

(a successful experiment which was then used by the Americans in a variety of forms, including 120mm tank ammunition during the 1990-91 Gulf War) slowed the project down and the funds dried up for procurement of the cannons.

The shotgun marriage between the tracked amphibious recce vehicle and the wheeled recce vehicle left a gap in the light armoured regiment doctrine as 8 CH tried to get Ferrets and Lynxes to work together. The inability of the light recce unit to fight and develop information would lead to the requirement for the Direct Fire Support Vehicle, the predecessor project to the Armoured Vehicle General Purpose examined in the next chapter.

Operation SNOW GOOSE: Cyprus and UNFICYP, 1964-1970

The Cyprus problem as it existed in 1964 when Canadian troops arrive as part of the United Nations forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was the product of a failed state. The bulk of the island population, four fifths of them of Greek extraction, had fought a rather dirty guerrilla war against the British between 1955 and 1959. Cyprus was granted independence, save for the British Sovereign Base Areas (SBA). The constitutional makeup of the new government was dysfunctional: the Greek Cypriots wanted unification with Greece, while the Turkish minority (which constituted 20% of the population) did not. Intercommunal violence broke out in December 1963 and the British temporarily intervened to keep the peace.

These SBA's were critical logistic and aerial platforms in NATO's strategy in the Mediterranean, now that the expanded Soviet fleet was sallying out and hosted by Algeria and Egypt, nations hostile to the western interests. With an already crushing superiority of Soviet forces on the Turkish and northern Greek borders, any interference behind the established lines could disrupt NATO's ability to deter the Soviets. The violence on the island produced tension between Greece and Turkey which in turn threatened NATO's foundations as an institution. Eventually, UNFICYP was formed to stabilize the island and protect NATO interests.

The initial Canadian deployment for UNFICYP consisted of the UN Standby Battalion group (1 R22eR) and Recce Sqn, RCD. Operation SNOW GOOSE commenced 13 March 1964 with a portion of Recce Sqn being loaded onto Yukon transport aircraft at Trenton and flown right into Nicosia Airport along with the fighting echelon from 1 R22eR. The remainder of the contingent's vehicles and stores were sent via Canada's only aircraft carrier HMCS Bonaventure. The mission was "to use its best efforts to prevent a

recurrence of the fighting and, as necessary, contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions." Whatever those were.

The RCD squadron, organized into five troops of four Ferrets each, generally worked the Lefke-Xeros area as well as the Nicosia Zone: the so-called Green Line. At this point, Cyprus was not divided into a Greek Cypriot half and a Turk Cypriot as it would later be in 1974. Essentially, the populations occupied enclaves that were interspersed with each other, much like Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina would become in the 1990s. Among their observation duties, the RCD contributed a troop to Delta Force, UNFICYP's immediate reaction force. This multinational organization, put together by Brigadier Jim Tedlie who was the Zone commander, consisted of a Finnish light infantry company in armoured trucks, a Danish recce troop, a portion of the Van Doo's Anti-Tank Platoon, and the RCD Ferret troop. Delta Force's mission was to react to situations rapidly and 'de-escalate' them through UN presence before they could get out of control. There were countless successful examples of Delta Force missions, including a serious one which involved Greek Cypriot encroachment on the UN-controlled golf course near the vital Nicosia airport.

LdSH Recce Squadron operations followed similar terms of reference to the RCD tasks. An additional role involved keeping track of Soviet arms shipments to the Greek Cypriots. These developments were extremely serious in that the shipments included T-34/85 tanks, which UNFICYP was ill-equipped to counter if the situation demanded it. LdSH Ferrets frequently paid surprise visits to Greek Cypriot base facilities to observe training activities and followed convoys around the island. A more exciting task was maintaining UNFICYP's freedom of movement on the Kyrenia road, which at times resulted in gunfire directed against UN vehicles and civilian convoys passing through.

The bulk of 8 CH's tenure with UNFICYP was in the volatile Kyrenia District north of Nicosia. Their primary tasks were to escort Greek Cypriot convoys twice a day through a large Turkish Cypriot enclave; to provide recce resources for the Zone HQ, and to man a number of OPs in north west Nicosia. As with previous rotations, A Sqn formed part of Delta Force, which was frequently called out to handle trouble spots in Melousha, Tremethousha, Arsos, and Paphos. In a noteworthy incident, the Greek Cypriots deployed a T-34/85 tank unit to shoot up a Turkish Cypriot enclave. The bulk of the squadron, in the middle of a celebration, was called out to back up the rapid reaction troop. The squadron ran into the Greek Cypriot armoured unit while it was trying to cut off the Turk enclave. The Canadian officer in the lead, Major J.A. St Aubin, 'socially engineered' the Greek Cypriot route control personnel into letting the Squadron pass on the MSR. Two kilometers down the road, the Squadron turned around and blocked the road (with some

help from a 106mm recoilless rifle section from the Canadian Guards) which resulted in a three-day 'Mexican Standoff' while the situation was de-escalated at the political level.

Later rotations included the FGH Recce Squadron. By this point, the roles altered slightly away from the Nicosia Green Line and more towards Kyrenia District. In November 1967, a nasty incident in the Kophinou area threatened to get out of control when a Greek patrol removed a Turk roadblock which resulted in a gunfight. The situation escalated when Greek armoured cars and infantry overran the village. UN OPs were shelled and seized by Greek forces. The bulk of the FGH squadron hit the road and forced several belligerent roadblocks with the intent of intervening in the flare-up. Unfortunately, for their own reasons, the local British commanders would not permit the Canadian Ferrets to move in. The Fort Garrys were forced to sit and watch the ritual humiliation of non-combatants: shades of what Canadian armoured soldiers would see in Bosnia and Croatia. In another incident Canadian troops on patrol were manhandled by armed Turks which prompted a show of force by the Recce Squadron. Harassment ceased in that particular area.

As with UNEF, the RCAC's UNFICYP operations were not without cost. The RCD lost Trooper J.H. Campbell when he swerved his Ferret out of the way to avoid killing a pedestrian, while 8 CH lost Trooper Leonard Nass to illness. The 1960s phase of UNFICYP operations was merely a prelude to a more dangerous confrontation in 1974 which would involve Canada's armoured soldiers.

Happy Time: The RCAC and NATO in the 1960s

The 1960s was a very active time for the Germany-based RCAC units. 4 Canadian Infantry Brigade Group's (changed to 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade Group in 1968) armoured regiments weathered three major international crises while simultaneously responding to NATO operational planning and technological changes related to the conduct of armoured warfare. The Berlin Crisis of 1958-1961 was instrumental in bringing to NATO's attention that the mere presence of nuclear weapons was not enough to deter aggressive Soviet actions. Conventional forces were still required to operate under the nuclear umbrella so that the enemy could not get away with 'salami tactics' around Berlin and on the inner-German Border or to chip away at the NATO periphery in AFNORTH, particularly Norway, and AFSOUTH in Turkey or Greece. Though NATO would not formally adopt a flexible response strategy until 1967, the recognition was there and it permeated operational matters relating to 4 Brigade. The main problem

was maintaining a formation capable of operating in a conventional, then a near nuclear, and then nuclear environment all at the same time, and having tactics to handle each situation.

Time and again Canada's armoured soldiers were confronted with dangerous Cold War crises. The first major crisis of the 1960s was the Berlin Crisis which simmered from 1958 to 1960 and threatened to get out of control in the summer of 1961. The erection of the Berlin Wall prompted a number of NATO measures and preparations were made to force the access corridors from West Germany to the beleaguered city. Plans were made to mobilize 3 CIBG in Canada (which included LdSH) and move it to West Germany alongside 4 CIBG. Shipping and airlift were chartered and made ready. 4 CIBG received an influx of 1200 reinforcements, the first test of the Flyover concept. After a protracted period of tension in which the Soviets test exploded an exorbitant number of nuclear weapons to threaten the West, NATO forces stood down and returned to their barracks.

Tensions generated during the Berlin Crisis flowed into the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Again, there was concern that the Soviets would interfere with Berlin in response to the Cuban blockade, or possibly attack NATO in a limited or general war. 8 CH, along with the other units in 4 Brigade, were alerted and deployed to survival areas with their wartime ammunition scales. Eventually, the order was given to move to an intermediate defensive position as war loomed even greater throughout October. Once again, the tension relaxed when the superpowers reached an accommodation: the Centurions returned to Fort Beausejour and the Ferrets to Fort Chambly.

The flexibility required for operating in a nuclear threat environment, as we have seen, was instrumental in defining the need for complete mechanization. Yet Canada was foot dragging in the production of the Bobcat family of vehicles and thus tank-infantry cooperation was relegated to 3/4-ton trucks packed with troops attempting to follow the Mk. V Centurions around on NATO exercises. Doctrinally, the infantry world was not overly enthusiastic about mechanization.

In the early 1960s, 4 Brigade was a motorized infantry force with a significant armoured punch. Its role was to cover the right flank of I(British) Corps against Soviet armour penetration of the main battle area. Essentially, this zone was a nuclear fire sack into which Honest John rockets equipped with 20 kt nuclear warheads would be dumped. Anything making it through the radioactive gauntlet would encounter a recce screen trying to develop nuclear targets and then the enemy would hit a dispersed infantry defensive line backed up with the Centurions.

The problem for the recce and infantry organizations was handling the crushing superiority of enemy armoured and mechanized forces. The obvious solution was to

introduce more tanks into 4 Brigade, perhaps make it an armoured brigade group. The powerful infantry lobby and ongoing funding problems essentially prevented this. The solution was technological: introduce the newly-developed Anti-Tank Guided Missile.

The weapons selected were the French ENTAC (2000 m range) and the SS-11B1 (3000 m). Numerous configurations were developed for mounting the ATGMs with jeeps and 3/4-ton trucks predominating in the infantry organizations and later a M-113 dual mount. There was even a Centurion test which involved mounting two to four ENTAC on the turret to supplement the main gun.³

While ATGM's proliferated and were later grouped into an infantry-run ATGM company, the recce squadrons realized that sneak and peek had some limitations. Since the light armoured idea was still developing and the appropriate vehicles were not yet available, some means had to be found to provide lethal coverage for the recce patrols. Eventually one vehicle in the seven-car troop was equipped with two ENTAC missiles. This vehicle would overwatch the recce patrols and assist in extraction if they encountered vehicles like the PT-76. By the late 1960s, the LdSH took over the ATGM role from the infantry anti-tank company (much to the chagrin of the artillery, who handled towed and SP anti-tank guns during the Second World War).

Flexibility on the battlefield also meant that the commander had to have greater access to timely information. This requirement produced the introduction of six CH-112 Nomads into 4 Brigade. The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps Helicopter Recce Troop, better known as 'Bubble Troop'. Bubble Troop formed part of Recce Squadron. Debuting in Ex LION CAGE in 1962, the Troop provided unprecedented recce coverage. The tactics developed by these early Armoured Corps fliers and observers (nap of the earth flying, pop ups and flares) eventually were incorporated into American helicopter doctrine just in time for the Vietnam War.

4 Brigade's recce forces proved themselves time and time and again on every NATO exercise throughout the 1960s. On Ex CANADA CUP, Recce Squadron trialed the Infrared (medium) Viewer to great effect. Operating with an ad hoc anti-tank force called Snipe Force, Recce Squadron observed and attrited the enemy forces and drove them into nuclear kill zones. On Ex TREBLE CHANCE, 4 Brigade acted as an enemy force and split into a number of combined arms sub-units called 'Ploops' which had a FGH Centurion tank troop, a recce patrol of two Ferrets, a FOO, and an infantry platoon. This was done to prove to the British commanders that a nuclear target could be denied. The

³. This mount was not adopted: it tended to get caught on trees and there were problems in developing crew drills: did the gunner handle the missile? The crew commander?

Ploops dispersed, infiltrated the lines and hastily reassembled and attacked at night through 'impassable' terrain.

On the heavy armour front, the Cuban Missile Crisis prompted some significant changes. 8 CH had just modified their vehicles to mount the 105 L7 in lieu of the 20-pounder. There was, however, not enough ammunition available when the crisis broke, which prompted a rapid re-barralling exercise prior to the movement of the regiment to its intermediary defensive positions in preparation for a Soviet attack. This in turn got the ball rolling and the Germany-based Centurions were upgraded from Mk. V to Mk. XI standard. These changes included adding the 105 mm L7 with the thermal sleeve, adding more armour, expanding the fuel capacity by lengthening the rear deck, and adding infrared nightfighting equipment in the form of an IR searchlight and driving lights. Again, this provided more flexibility so that operations could continue around the clock.

And around the clock they did, on every NATO exercise. On Ex ROB ROY (1967) 4 Brigade was augmented with a British armoured regiment and a Dutch armoured regiment to form "4 Canadian Armoured Division." The infantry, now equipped with the M-113 series APC, forded the Weser River with 81 APCs, while the Centurions conducted a surreptitious river crossing and plunged into the evil 'Lionian' rear area led by Recce Squadron on a night jaunt that left the exercise umpires exhausted and the higher control people in a frenzy.

An item worthy of mention is the prestigious Canadian Army Trophy (CAT). This metal model of a Centurion tank was first unveiled in 196X and was awarded annually for the what became the Olympics of tank gunnery. The eligible competitors were drawn from those armies contributing forces to NATO's Central Region. Preparations for CAT assumed Herculean proportions as each nation formed an elite team to battle it out for the accolade 'Best Tankers in NATO'. The first Canadian regiment to win CAT was LdSH in 1967.

Once again, 4 CMBG was alerted for possible operations in the Spring of 1968. The crushing of the pro-democracy movement in Czechoslovakia generated serious concern in NATO as it might have been a provocation or a trigger for further action against West Germany. LdSH had been preparing its Centurion Mk. XI's for Ex SCHWARZE LOEWE when word came in that the Soviets landed an airborne division in Prague and mobilized a further eight divisions, which then moved into East Germany in addition to the existing 25 Soviet and 12 East German divisions present. The LdSH's Centurions were placed aboard rail cars and the ammunition was once again brought out of storage. The units moved to their survival areas and prepared for the worst, which fortunately

didn't come. To what extent the NATO alert contributed to sending a message to Moscow is obscure, but it was clear that interference with NATO allies would not be tolerated.

Ex KEYSTONE (1968) underscore how flexible 4 CMBG had become by the time of the Czech Crisis. KEYSTONE did not start off which Armageddon: the exercise scenario postulated a low intensity conflict which gradually escalated into a general war involving nuclear weapons use. LdSH and 8 CH Recce Squadron were subjected to 'demonstrations', 'terrorism', and 'sabotage' prior to offensive operations launched by Redland. Blueland then fought a dramatic delaying action across Westphalia and LdSH was brought into the rear to act as a counterpenetration force.

Actions by this force stalled the Redland offensive which in fact delayed Blueland nuclear weapons 'use' for a time though limited and controlled strikes were later authorized. This was quite a change from earlier NATO exercises in which nuclear weapons were employed immediately at the start of an exercise and the formations were required to operate under such conditions. KEYSTONE demonstrated that a conventional 'pause' strategy was feasible, but that it would require larger conventional forces, particularly more tanks, so that the enemy's armoured and mechanized tide could be deterred and stopped if it became necessary to do so.

Integration, Unification, Francophonization, Reorganization

Integration of the armed forces, that is, the melding of some support functions, did not have as great an impact as Unification. Unification generated Mobile Command, which technically superseded the Army as an entity. Mobile Command, however, was not supposed to be Army HQ: it was originally meant to be a joint force generator. Even 4 Brigade initially fell outside of Mobile Command's purview. Over time, however, vital functions which had resided within Army HQ, particularly those relating to armoured troops and mechanized doctrine, had to be recreated within Mobile Command. This in turn generated a fair amount of bureaucratic confusion throughout the 1960s which affected a number of armoured acquisition projects.

Concurrent with the integration and unification programme, Paul Hellyer established a commission led by Brigadier E.R. Suttie to examine how to reduce the Militia from 51 000 men to 30 000 men. As Hellyer saw it, "Many units were far below strength, and too many of the reservists were overfed World War II veterans whose age and physical condition would have made it difficult to shape up in an emergency." Backed by the CGS, General Geoffrey Walsh, who was focused on preserving forces-in-being instead of

those for mobilization, the Suttie Commission recommended deep cuts to the Militia organizations. Several RCAC units were eliminated or, as it was euphemistically termed at the time, "transferred to the Supplementary Order of Battle." Thus, the 4th Princess Louise's Dragoon Guards, the 12th Manitoba Dragoons, the 19th Alberta Dragoons, the 14th Canadian Hussars, and the Halifax Rifles passed into history. The Sherbrooke Regiment and the 7th/11th Hussars were lucky: they amalgamated to form the Sherbrooke Hussars. Some units were converted from armour to infantry: the Algonquin Regiment in 1965 and the Grey and Simcoe Forresters in 1970. This left eighteen Militia RCAC regiments.

A number of eliminated units were dedicated recce regiments. As a result, some of the Sherman-equipped units were converted to recce regiments. Between 1965 and 1967, the PEIR, the Governor General's Horse Guards, the Queen's York Rangers, the 1st Hussars, the Elgin Regiment, the Saskatchewan Dragoons, Le Regiment de Hull, and the King's Own Calgary Regiment were provided with jeeps mounted with machine guns to fulfill the new role. The Sherman-equipped units soldiered on, despite the decreasing availability of spare parts for their twenty-year old vehicles.

The reorganization period in the 1960s also included the formation of French Language Units. Chief of Defence Staff J.V. Allard claims in his autobiography that, when asked to be CDS by Paul Hellyer, he accepted the position on condition that there be greater recognition given to francophones in the armed forces. This coincided with the Pearson Government's belief, in the wake of the first wave of FLQ bombings and political unrest in Quebec, that greater integration of Quebecois in the government in all departments and Cabinet was imperative if Canada was to survive as a unified entity.

Allard set about establishing the so-called FLUs in the 1966-67 period. Out of this came the creation of 5e Groupement Brigade du Canada, based at CFB Valcartier near Quebec City. 5e GBC was formed concurrently with francophone artillery and armoured units alongside the already-existing three Van Doos battalions. The nucleus of what became 12 Regiment Blinde du Canada (12 RBC) was the francophone "A" Sqn, 8 CH, based at CFB Valcartier which had essentially been a FLU in embryo since 1958. Allard then changed the name of the Trois Riviers Regiment, a Militia armoured unit, to 12 RBC (Milice) so that 12 RBC would have a supporting unit affiliated with it and that TRR traditions could be used as the basis for 12 RBC. 12 RBC was officially stood up to join the RCAC family on 6 May 1968.

Unhappy Time: The Need to Replace Centurion

Canada's MBT inventory in 1964 stood at 97 Centurion Mk. XI with the infrared nightfighting kit and 105mm L7 gun, and another 80 Mk.V equipped with the 20 pounder gun.⁴ Nevertheless, the Army started looking seriously at a Centurion replacement in 1964. The development standardization both in NATO and amongst the ABC armies (American-British-Canadian)⁵ allowed Canada access to the latest armoured fighting vehicle technological developments. The Army considered that the Centurion would be obsolete by 1971.

The MBT project that attracted the most attention within the RCAC was the German-American MBT-70 project which kicked off in 1963. The MBT-70 was supposed to be a 1970s replacement for the American M-60A1 and the West German Standard Panzer, also known as the Leopard. An ambitious project, MBT-70 was to have a 152mm Shillelagh gun-launcher (with combustible casing ammunition!), a remote-controlled 20mm coupola cannon, and a radical suspension system which allowed the tank to take a plethora of height configurations. Hellyer was convinced and in 1964 wrote to U.S. Secretary of Defence McNamara expressing serious interest and offered Canadian participation.

The CDS General Allard, considered the options placed before him in 1965. As he saw it, these were: MBT-70, the M-60A1, and the Chieftain, which would be available shortly. Another alternative was to acquire enough Sheridans for a partial equipping of the armoured force.

In the meantime, the Pearson Government experienced severe budgetary problems which resulted in cuts to a variety of CF programmes so that the social services promised in the 1963 election could be fulfilled. This state of affairs put Canadian participation in the MBT-70 project on the shelf. In any event, the systems going into MBT-70 were technologically immature. Though several prototypes were built and tested this promising vehicle was unable to meet expectations. Experience gained on MBT-70, however, directly benefited future Leopard developments and also contributed to the M-1 Abrams programme two decades later.

In 1966, a Mobile Command study argued that there were really only two contenders: MBT-70 and Chieftain (which was being pushed by a British-trained staff officer). Perhaps Canada should go for a limited Chieftain buy. Another alternative generated

⁴The disposition of the balance of the 347 Centurions originally acquired in 1951 is a mystery, since 218 were disposed of in the 1970s: If we assume that 41 of the disposed tanks were war reserve stocks in storage, the other 88 are missing.

⁵ Note that Australia was eventually added to produce 'ABCA' in the 1960s.

within Mobile Command was the possibility of a M-60A1 rental agreement. The Americans, however, rejected this idea.

A more detailed analysis conducted by the CDS laid out the alternatives. The RCAC could use unmodified Centurions, which was unacceptably dangerous in battle. Or the Mk. V Centurions could be modified with the 105mm L7. This presented problems with two different fire control systems and lack of IR fighting kit. Third, all the Mk. V's could be modified to Mk. XI standard. This was feasible: the minimum number to be modified was 47 in Europe and 35 in Canada. Finally, there was the possibility of a limited M-60A1 buy. The minimum number of vehicles that Canada needed was 130 (107 in Europe and 23 in Canada), pending the decision to fully equip later with a single MBT.⁶

In 1967, discussions between DND and Krauss-Maffei were initiated. Interest was directed towards the Leopard tank, formerly known as the Standard Panzer. Other NATO allies, specifically Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway had orders totaling 3000 vehicles in with Krauss-Maffei. Certainly the stated Canadian requirement of 150 vehicles could be met by the firm? DND bureaucrats were even willing to go as low as 50 tanks to equip 4 CMBG and leave it at that. The Germans countered at 100 tanks.

Two things prevented Canada from acquiring Leopards in 1967. The official response was "financial difficulties preclude our making any firm commitment at the present time." An additional unofficial reason was that the Krauss-Maffei production facilities were too close to the East German border. If war occurred in the interim, there would be no vehicles or spares and Canada would be without tanks. This led Krauss-Maffei to develop an idea of building a Leopard tank factory in Canada, but this did not progress beyond the discussion stages for reasons which remain obscure.

Continuing efforts to replace Centurion were frustrated by a certain Air Commodore Aldwinkle of CFHQ. In a memo replying to the VCDS who asked that the programme receive priority attention, Aldwinkle stated:

Since the whole MBT programme is based on the assumptions: 1. That the force structure as proposed by Mobile Command is valid; and 2. That there is a continuing requirement for MBTs, it would appear that these assumptions should be reassessed before any attempt is made to provide funds for the MBT on an ad hoc basis.

The VCDS used a red felt-tipped marker to place the letters "B.S!" beside this paragraph. This was the negative effects of Integration and Unification in a nutshell:

⁶. Note that the rental idea and the minimum required tank numbers will crop up again and influence the Leopard buy in the 1970s.

interservice rivalry for capital equipment replacement funds was now pushed down instead of up. The battle for the tank would take place outside of the old Chiefs of Staff Committee meetings (which no longer existed) and be subjected to internecine headquarters staff intrigue.

An example of the problems that the RCAC was experiencing were the sheer numbers of unserviceable vehicles. In May 1967, 3 CIBG reported that there were only twelve 'runners' of the 56 Centurions stationed at CFB Gagetown. In 1967 the VCDS declared that the 194 Shermans were obsolete. Of these 61 would remain with the Militia for the time being, 22 would be de-turreted and retained at Borden for use as M-113A1 training substitutes for combined arms training. 48 would become monuments and the rest were destined to become hard targets on ranges by the early 1970. The Militia vehicles joined them soon afterwards, fodder for students at the Combat Training Centre developing expertise on the 66mm LAW and 84mm Carl Gustav rocket launchers.

Operations ESSAY and GINGER: The October Crisis, 1970

The subject of Quebec separatist terrorism is highly controversial, as is the 1970 military response to it. When all is said and done, there was a serious challenge to the Canadian form of government and way of life. This threat was posed by groups using or threatening to use violent methods. It was unclear to the government at the time how far this could go. Was revolutionary violence being supported from abroad by the Soviets or their surrogates to undermine Canada? A wave of such activity had swept through numerous countries throughout the 1960s. Even if the violence was 'autonomous', the disruption it caused could be exploited by Canada's enemies in other ways.

In any event, there was an escalating pattern of FLQ violence which started in 1963. Several Canadian Forces armouries were raided and automatic weapons, radios, and even anti-tank weapons disappeared into the Laurentian hinterland. Other CF bases and armouries were subjected to bombing attacks. FLQ cells infiltrated Quebec Militia units to get training and access to weapons. FLQ personnel trained in Algeria and publicly threatened selective assassination. These were not the actions of "a bunch of kids trying to make a revolution."

The fight against separatist terrorism in Quebec dated to the inception of the Front de Liberation du Quebec (FLQ) in 1963. In general terms, the fight was conducted by municipal, provincial, and federal police forces. This started to change as the FLQ itself altered its tactics in 1969. The police forces were unable to handle large-scale rioting

inspired by FLQ agitators and troops had to be called in from CFB Valcartier for riot control and police duties (Op PEGASUS). With the bombing of National Defence Headquarters in the heart of Ottawa and the killing of a DND employee early in 1970, followed by the kidnappings of British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Quebec Cabinet minister Pierre Laporte in October, something had to be done.

Two days after the Cross kidnapping, a raid on an FLQ training camp produced intelligence which indicated that the ammunition depot at Camp Bouchard near Montreal would be attacked. Mobile Command and 5e GBC initiated contingency plan NIGHT HAWK. 12 RBC covertly deployed twelve Ferrets, five M-113s and Assault Troop from CFB Valcartier by road to Camp Bouchard to pre-empt the attack, which fortunately for the FLQ, did not take place.

Mobile Command was then tasked to protect CFB Bagotville, CFS Val D'Or and CFS La Macaza. These bases housed AIR-2A Genie and BOMARC nuclear air defence weapons and their delivery systems assigned to the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD). A previous FLQ-inspired incident at La Macaza had occurred in 1964 and it was critical that Canada demonstrate to the United States that NORAD's nuclear capability (part of the strategic deterrent system) remained secure. Operation RIVET was activated and 12 RBC deployed sub-units to cover these sites. Eventually, part of 8 CH from Petawawa helped out at the Val D' Or site.

Concurrent with all this was Operation FENCER, later called Operation GINGER. This was a VIP and Vital Point protection mission in the nation's capital. The spectre of assassination and more kidnappings prompted the Solicitor General to request back-up for the RCMP and Ottawa police forces. Within five hours, a 1000-man vanguard, mostly drawn from 8 CH in Petawawa which was part of 2 Combat Group led by Brigadier S.V. Radley-Walters, was in Ottawa. Ferrets roared in and out of the Cartier Square Drill Hall, while the bulk of the men were put up in crowded conditions at 13 Personnel Depot. One squadron conducted night patrols, and one remained as the 2 Combat Group mobile reserve. A troop augmented 12 RBC in Montreal, which formed part of the Mobile Command mobile reserve in that area.

The Hussars spent their time in Ottawa conducting a variety of tasks. In supporting the police, 8 CH patrols were to look out for specific stolen vehicles which the intelligence operations centre believed to be used by FLQ cells. Ferrets formed part of the Immediate Reaction Force. More men were deployed in groups to escort and guard Cabinet members, Members of Parliament, senior bureaucrats, and their families. For example, Deputy Prime Minister John Turner had two Hussars assigned to him 24 hours and day, 7 days a week, armed with SMGs. Turner even requested that his escort train him how to

use the SMG and the Browning 9mm pistol so that he could protect himself if necessary. Other Hussars patrolled the streets exerting a critical presence needed to reassure the citizens that there was somebody on guard for them in this troubled time.

The Quebec portion was a separate operation called ESSAY. The express purpose of Operations GINGER and ESSAY was to provide a mass visible military presence to reassure Canadians that the government was still in control and to release police forces so that the terrorist hunt could be mounted. Mobile units were critical in this show of force because they could be moved rapidly and give the impression that Mobile Command was everywhere at once.

While the Canadian Airborne Regiment and their attached helicopter squadron (Op ESSAY's Immediate Reaction Force) conducted airmobile operations in the Laurentians, 12 RBC was redeployed from the far flung nuclear bases to assist in handling VP guard tasks near the critical Hydro stations at Tadoussac. In many cases, three and four-man detachments each equipped with an Arctic tent were spread out to conduct the freezing, boring task of protecting power pylons from sabotage. 'C' Sqn 8 CH from Gagetown joined 12 RBC at that location for a time: chainsaws were then employed to build log cabins for the VP guards. Drummondville, Sorel, and Trois-Riviers also hosted 12 RBC squadrons during the long cold ten weeks the regiments were deployed. Several cordon and sweep operations took place in a desperate search for Laporte's and Cross's kidnapers.

In the end, several FLQ cells were uncovered by intelligence and police forces. The ones directly involved in the Cross and Laporte kidnappings were identified, but sadly for Laporte it was too late. As for the FLQ cell holding Cross, a massive cordon and search operation in Montreal surrounded their safe house. The Government gave in and traded a flight to Cuba for Cross's life. The unidentified portions of the FLQ apparatus melted away and either gave up their violent struggle or turned to legitimate politics to achieve their aims. There is no doubt that the rapid deployment of light recon regiments in Ontario and Quebec significantly bolstered public morale during this dangerous time and indirectly contributed to other anti-FLQ operations by suppressing the enemy's freedom of movement and freeing up other forces.

Conclusion

The first half of the Cold War produced three types of Canadian commitments which affected the RCAC. The first was to provide components to a multi-national NATO deterrence force in Europe. Second, Canada became increasingly involved with

contributing forces to multi-national UN missions which were engaged in stamping out brushfires on NATO's periphery. Finally, there was the domestic front, be it national survival operations in the wake of a nuclear war, or countering revolutionary terrorism, both of which threatened the foundations and existence of the nation. The men of the RCAC had to meet the challenges of developing a force which could evolve to meet these three commitments during extremely uncertain times. These challenges were doctrinal, training, organizational, and most importantly, equipment oriented. There was an ongoing struggle during the war without battles, a struggle which would continue into the 1970s when the very existence of the armoured corps was called into question.