

[ORIGINAL DRAFT CHAPTER FOR RCAC History]

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Chapter 19: Brave New World 1990-2000

Introduction

The Berlin Wall came down in November 1989. This event, concurrent with massive demonstrations in Romania and a new permissiveness in Czechoslovakia, demonstrated for all that that grim Communist system that had gripped Eastern Europe for seventy years had almost run its course. In 1990, East Germany ceased to exist and by 1991 was reunified with the West. Communist cadres were progressively dismantled. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union also declared itself null and void, it was still a time of great perturbation. Nobody could be sure at that time if the system was truly dead. In August 1991, an attempted coup in Russia confirmed how unstable things actually were, despite the great celebrations in the West that the Cold War was over.

The Royal Canadian Armoured Corps had, since 1945, existed in a world which had two solitudes: the totalitarian Communist systems, and the free West, both linked by the nuclear balance of terror. All conflicts which RCAC units were part of, Europe, Cyprus, and the Middle East, were understood to be part of the larger conflict called the Cold War. Suddenly, things were very, very different. Optimistic terms like 'The New World Order' were used initially, to be replaced just as rapidly by a 'New World Disorder.'

The Cold War had had a dampening effect on local, regional, and ethnic conflicts outside of the NATO Area. Both sides came to realize that sparks in the peripheral areas could lead to conflagrations in Europe which in turn had nuclear consequences. This status quo no longer applied, in some cases quite literally overnight.

Suddenly, smouldering hotspots in Africa, the Middle East and the Balkans burst forth in waves of mass savagery that had not been seen in decades. New phrases like 'ethnic cleansing' entered our vocabulary. The immediacy of the instantaneous satellite news

organizations (the 'CNN Effect') beamed the viciousness right into the living rooms of people in the West which in turn prompted almost continuous cries for Canada and other nations the "Do something, Do anything!" By the end of the 1990s, the operational tempo of the drastically reduced Canadian Forces was so high that the entire system threatened to burn out. Canada's armoured soldiers were deployed to a large number of locations for a greater duration than at any point in Canadian military history.

The 1990s caught the Canadian Forces and the rest of the world off guard and it took some time to regroup. Doctrine, equipment and training which had been focused on a mid-to high intensity ground war in NATO Europe now had to be modified and supplemented for a new type of conflict: Operations Other Than War or 'OOTW'. OOTW was more than just peacekeeping in the traditional sense like the UNEF and UNFICYP operations. New forms of peace activity emerged: Peace support operations, humanitarian operations, peace observation, peacemaking, and the best term that George Orwell had to offer, 'peace enforcement', also known as 'war.' The more pragmatic Canadian Army approach in the 1990s was to have three divisions, 'Peace', 'Conflict', and 'War', in which 'War' was a declared form of conflict and all other forms of violence were lumped into the 'Conflict' category.

The decline of the nation-state in the new era also altered the threat. The threat was no longer the massed Soviet mechanized hordes on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The threat could now consist of a sociopathic 13-year old computer hacker with the ability to shut down strategic communications systems. The threat was local warlords in a decaying African country using pillaged ex-Soviet tanks and artillery to block or even kill disaster relief workers to prevent them from feeding their starving enemies from another clan. The threat included the creation of autonomous para-states consisting of 1000 people defying international law by facilitating drug and arms smuggling. Above all, the threat consisted of anarchy, an anarchy that was armed with increasingly sophisticated weapons. This anarchy posed a variety of non-traditional threats to Canada's worldwide interests and Canada had to respond.

It took some time for the Canadian Army to recognize all of this and adapt. That said, it was not immediately apparent in the early 1990s that the world had drastically changed. There was still a very large mechanized threat to NATO well into 1991, as evidenced by

the potential for reactionary coups and the fact that the local Russian commanders were increasingly out of a centralized command loop. It was therefore prudent on NATO's part to continue business as usual, 'business' being defined as collective training, massed field exercises, and continual vigilance to ensure that anarchy stayed out of North America and Western Europe.

Ex 'On Guard' 1990: Total Force in Action

The steps taken during the 1980s to revitalize the Militia-regular force relationship came to an apex in 1990. Large-scale Canada-based exercises, the 'Rendezvous' or 'RV' series, had been held by the regular force throughout the 1980s in Gagetown and Wainwright. In many cases there was Militia augmentation, particularly during RV 85, an exercise which approached divisional-level numbers. The reserve revitalization programme mandated by the 1987 White Paper generated a similar exercise series for the Militia called 'On Guard'.

Ex 'On Guard 90' was the first of the series. Unlike RV, 'On Guard' was in fact a number of almost-concurrent exercises held at Wainwright, Meaford, and Gagetown throughout the summer of 1990. In effect, the Militia Areas were grouped by region. For example, the Atlantic Militia Area and Secteur L'Est concentrated at Gagetown, while Pacific and Prairie Areas went to Wainwright. One objective of 'On Guard' was to form brigade groups from the areas and then fill out the blank files as much as possible with regular force augmentation, which was the reverse of the 'RV' or 'Fallex' series. In the case of Atlantic Militia Area, there was a Cougar squadron and RHQ Recce Troop from 8 CH(M), a Recce Squadron (PEIR) two and half infantry battle groups (the bulk mounted in M-113s and Grizzlies provided by 2 RCR), and a towed artillery regiment which was an amalgamation of various Maritimes-based units.

'On Guard 90' was the culmination of nearly a years training based on the old progression system of individual-troop-squadron-combat team- battle group-brigade group, in other words very reminiscent of the 1950s. By the time the units deployed to the four training areas, atrophied skills like tank-infantry cooperation were starting to get

shaken out. Cougar units were used as tank surrogates in all phases of the battle, including the covering force force battle, while the recce troops progressed through screens of all types and even rear area security operations against 'Spetsnaz' teams. Militia personnel, generally used to sub-unit activity, could actually see a formation in action and where his or her unit fit into the larger scheme of things.

With the advent of the new era and its associated budget cuts in the Quixotic quest of the 'peace dividend', the 'On Guard' series ceased after 'On Guard 91.' 'On Guard 91' was conducted at a greatly reduced scale, almost the same as the Militia Concentrations (MILCONs) of the past, though the Militia-regular force connection remained. As the 1990s progressed, the Militia armoured units shifted back into their old role of providing individually trained armoured soldiers to augment regular units, though annual ARCONs were held to exercise at brigade group-level.

Op 'Salon': Oka, 1990

In the spring of 1990 at Kanesatake, Quebec, the Oka municipal government decided to challenge the rights of the local Mohawk community to some land with the aim of expanding a golf course. Soon members of the Mohawk Warrior Society, a paramilitary group, were advising the native residents of Kanesatake on how to conduct armed resistance and barricades went up. In an inept assault by riot police on 11 July 1990, a police corporal was shot and killed. The SQ retreated and established a perimeter around Kanesatake

On the other side of the St Lawrence River at the Kahnawake reserve, a mix of locals and Warriors blockaded the Mercier Bridge and set up several barricades. Warrior reinforcements and weapons then flowed covertly into the region based on the belief that the standoff was a matter of exerting sovereign authority over Mohawk land and in another sense to protect the money accrued through gambling and cigarette smuggling (apparently one enterprise, a shack known as Joe's Smoke Shop, brought in more than half a million dollars a year in illegal income).

There were an estimated 200 insurgents at Khanesatake and 400 at Kahawake. Seventy of these were estimated to be hard core radicals. The Mohawk forces were equipped with several hundred weapons which included AK-47 and M-16 assault rifles, .50 caliber sniper rifles as well as RPG-7 and 66mm LAW anti-tank weapons. The insurgents, some of which had military training in the CF and American armed forces, were dug into a trench system and had erected obstacles covered by fire. On 6 August, the Provincial Government informed the Federal Government that they did not have the resources to handle the situation and the Army was called in.

This was an extremely volatile situation in a densely populated area. The local Quebecois were rioting because of the bridge closure (some went so far as to hire a biker gang to put a 'hit' out on local native leaders) and the more militant wing of the Warrior Society wanted further action across the country. The Army's plan, Operation 'Salon', was to display crushing military superiority as a deterrent tool, surround the two enclaves and squeeze them while at the same time conducting psychological warfare operations to reduce the possibility of resistance. If the situation seriously deteriorated, the enclaves would be rushed with armoured vehicles leading the way. A further complicating factor involved the residents of Chateauguay.

The bulk of 5e GBC deployed to the region, with the Van Doos on the Oka/Khanasatake side and 2 RCR on the Kahawake side. A key component of this plan was the prominent movement and media exposure of armoured and mechanized forces. The media was allowed to see 5 RALC deploy M-109mm SP guns. Similarly, a troop of Leopards from the RCD squadron at CFB Gagetown were brought in and the media was given access to them. These vehicles were equipped with mine plows and bulldozer blades. 12 RBC was, however, in the middle of a Cyprus rotation and could only deploy two squadrons: recce squadron with Lynx and a Cougar squadron. Additional personnel were needed and 8 CH(M) was then asked to provide half of a six-vehicle Cougar troop.

The 12 RBC squadron and mixed 12 RBC/8 CH(M) troop initially operated on the Oka side of the river. While the Van Doos held a perimeter around the insurgents, the recce troops conducted a series of vehicle check points, traffic control, and roving patrols behind them. Presence was also exerted in a sector recce operation in hills near the reservation.

Eventually, the mixed 12 RBC/8 CH(M) troop, now led by Warrant Officer Scotty MacDougall, was deployed to the Khanawake side of the river. The six Cougars were grouped with 2 RCR's Combat Support Company to form the Quick Reaction Force. On 15 minutes notice to move, the QRF was corralled in the so-called 'petting zoo', a fenced off compound near a rail yard which drew the attention of the locals.

Though there was a lot of 'hurry up and wait', the QRF was called out several times, in many cases to rattle, shake up and deceive the opposition. In one case, the Cougars had to escort an M-113 -equipped infantry company through the reserve at night to raid a suspected weapons storage site. Spotlights were strapped to the 76mm guns and were used to illuminate suspected fire positions as the force moved through the darkened streets. The realization came to WO MacDougall as a shock: "Here I am in a Cougar-a training vehicle, not an operational vehicle-driving through downtown Canada bombed up with 40 rounds of HESH and Cannister, three boxes of coax and white phosphorous grenades. We had been trained to fight the Soviets in Europe and here we were, doing what we trained for, back home in the suburbs of Montreal!" The Cougars rolled up and secured the perimeter and illuminated the scene as the RCR infantry rushed the building and did an aggressive room clearance of the house, leaving glow sticks in the windows of the cleared rooms.

After the nasty Tenikeheh island brawl between 2 RCR and the Mohawks during a weapons sweep, the Cougar crews trained for 'close quarters fighting' (since 'riot control' with armoured vehicles was a politically unacceptable) and developed tactics where the Cougars would provide flank security to the riot control troops and sharpshooters would be placed on the back decks to fire down into the crowd. Indeed, when the Cougars arrived on the scene of a serious rock throwing incident, the presence of the vehicles was enough to disperse the belligerents.

Plans were also formulated by 5e GBC to storm the barricades given certain contingencies. The CO of 2 RCR approached the Cougar troop leader and indicated that one of these roadblocks could be a problem since it consisted mostly of 'I' beams. He was told that 40 rounds of HESH would ensure that it would no longer be a problem if the order was so given. Fortunately for all involved, the Mohawk resistance eventually collapsed and the situation was defused.

The War that Never Was: Operation 'Broadsword' 1990-91

While 12 RBC and 8 CH(M) were deploying for Operation 'Salon' in August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded the oil-rich nation of Kuwait. Iraq was also pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, which when added to his existing chemical and biological weapons stocks and Hussein's historic willingness to use them, threatened to undermine the stability of the entire region, with consequent economic effects for Western Europe, Japan, and North America.

Canadian Forces Europe in West Germany put together a contingency plan to provide a battle group drawn from 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade if land forces were needed. This contingency battle group included an 8th Hussars Leopard squadron. At the same time, Mobile Command in St. Hubert and NDHQ were examining more detailed contingency planning. By mid-August, the deployment of a brigade group was the sixth option generated by these agencies. More detailed contingency planning was then conducted between FMC, 1 Canadian Division, and 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade. Dubbed a 'staff check' so that the government could deny the existence of a contingency plan if queried by the media and opposition, Contingency Plan 'Broadsword' eventually stabilized so that a 'Middle East Brigade Group' would include a tank regiment (8th Hussars), a Recce Squadron (composite: 8th Hussars, Strathconas) and three mechanized infantry battalions. Instruction was given by the CDS that the formation was to be able to operate independently from an allied corps, something which was unusual since 4 CMB and its predecessors always worked with an allied corps in Europe.

The original CFE contingency plan was based on existing establishments, that is, the Leopard C-1 would be employed. Early portions of the staff check also saw Leopard employment. As things developed, however, FMC and the Divisional HQ started to develop a "we can't go without _____" mentality and more and more items which had

been cancelled after the 1989 budget crunch were included in the 'wish list.' Naturally, one of these was a new Main Battle Tank.

There were several options available to planners. Not all were committed to paper and none appear to have received any form of higher-level approval to be pursued officially. In some cases, requirements and ideas were generated by different headquarters and not passed on to others.

Some favoured going with Leopard C-1, with the argument that crew retraining was unnecessary and that Militia personnel could convert to Leopard from Cougar with no problem and augment the Canada-based regiments if necessary. Others thought that the Americans should be approached. Could Canada get M-60A3's with the new thermal image sight? There were lots of these vehicles in storage since they had been replaced with the M-1 Abrams. Some less pessimistic planners thought that the Americans should be approached to provide a regiment of M-1A1's, since the Americans were deploying M-1A2 into the Gulf. The excitement level continued to build.

Canadian ground forces were not sent to fight in the Gulf. The inability of the Government and its servants in the Department of National Defence to make up their mind in a timely fashion on the commitment of Canadian ground forces, in part due to an isolationist faction embedded within the bureaucracy, ensured that Operation 'Broadsword' was shelved. The RCAC once again missed an opportunity to make a contribution to world stability and missed the opportunity to re-equip with a modern MBT.

Disintegration (Again)

The 1989 'hold' on defence activity by the Mulroney Government was only a precursor for deep cuts to Canada's military capability. The collapse of the Berlin Wall convinced some policymakers in the early 1990s that the Cold War was over and that a 'peace dividend' was now possible. Monies which had gone for defence items and activities might now be redistributed elsewhere. The biggest item on the budgetary chopping block was the entire Canadian military presence in Europe. Bureaucratic

manouvring placed Lahr, Baden, and 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade under the cleaver's blade and in one fell swoop, Canada was pulling out of Germany after 42 years. The long term political and military effects were not taken into consideration.

The debate now shifted to what was to happen to 4 Brigade since it was the only fully-equipped armoured and mechanized formation in the Army. The favoured view was to bring it back Canada and put it in Gagetown, while leaving a battlegroup stationed in Germany. This battlegroup would be called the Stationed Task Force (STF) included an armoured squadron and plans were made to establish the STF with either an American or British formation. The old Canadian bases in northern Germany were even considered to house the STF.

An anti-NATO isolationist faction within DND, the most prominent proponent which was Deputy Minister Robert Fowler, opposed the continued stationing of Canadian forces in Europe and killed the STF concept. In order to prevent the re-establishment of 4 CMB in Canada, Fowler next attempted to get the Canadian Forces to scrap all of the Leopard tanks stationed in Lahr, a move successfully resisted by MGen Jim Gervais. Once again, the RCAC came within a whisker of being gutted.

The close-out from Lahr and Baden occurred between 1992 and 1994, at the height of Army operations in the former Yugoslavia. The last 4 CMB units disbanded by August 1993. The 8th Hussars repatriated to Canada in 1993 and melded with 8 CH(M) to form Canada's only Total Force armoured regiment, with its headquarters in Moncton, NB, a tank squadron in Gagetown, and two Cougar/recce squadrons in Sussex and Moncton.

While this was in progress, there were several attempts made to acquire new tanks from other sources. For example, the Government chose to sell off the Army's Chinook medium lift helicopter fleet. The Dutch were interested in these newly-refurbished machines. There were movements to work out a deal whereby Canada would get some of the Dutch Army's Leopard II's, since the Dutch were downsizing their NATO commitments.

The signing of the Conventional Forces in Europe arms control treaty led to another potential avenue. The terms of the treaty meant that some NATO nations were going to transfer or scrap large numbers of vehicles from the two designated reduction zones in Western Europe. This meant that upgraded Leopard 1 A4's or A5's and perhaps older

versions of the M-1 Abrams or war stocks of M-60A3's would have to go. Surely it would be no problem to acquire 120 or so from some NATO ally? The exact reasons why these acquisitions were not made remains obscure, though former Deputy Minister Robert Fowler bragged to the Somalia Commission that he had prevented Canada from 'wasting' money on further MBT acquisition.

The disposition of the Leopard tanks was the subject of some debate. Since narrowly surviving the fate of the Centurions, the Leopards were loaded up and brought home after having all of their running gear inspected by Customs to ensure that potato blight had not adhered to the tracks. The decision was taken to give a squadron of Leopards to each Canada-based armoured regiment, a move which was hotly debated. Two factors were used in this decision. First, it was felt by some that the presence of tanks in all regiments kept the skills alive across the board. Second, there could be political problems if all the tanks were centralized in one regiment, depending where that regiment was located and what training areas it had access to. Despite that fact that it increased maintenance costs, the tanks were parcelled out with the understanding that the RCAC was in 'skills preservation' mode, not unlike the mid 1970s.

Operation 'Cordon': Somalia, 1993

The exact strategic reasons for Canada's involvement in Somalia in 1993 remain obscure. The television images beamed via satellite portrayed a humanitarian disaster of gargantuan proportions in a seemingly anarchic African country. This uncontextualized media outcry was pivotal in forcing Western nations to intervene in what amounted to a civil war in progress. The existing UN humanitarian aid and observation organizations (UNOSOM) in Somalia was in conflict with one faction which held Mogadishu and was on the receiving end of a variety of forms of military harassment. Therefore, the UN authorized a military intervention to protect the UN aid agencies and disarm local military forces within a defined area. This defined area, however, covered only one armed faction. If those forces were disarmed, other factions outside of the designated Unified Task Force (UNITAF) area could then win the civil war when the UN forces left

since they would not be disarmed. This brought the UN forces into conflict with the local groups within its operating area.

The Canadian unit selected for the initial UNOSOM mission was the Airborne Regiment, which had to re-organize into a mechanized infantry battalion. Consequently, the RCD in Petawawa wound up training 60 airborne soldiers in five days to drive Grizzly's, vehicles which were handed over from 1 RCR. Then the mission changed to a UN Charter Chapter 7 intervention mission and the decision was made to include a armoured squadron. 'A' Squadron RCD was selected and given two weeks to prepare.

The original organization mimicked a tank squadron, that is, four four-car troops, a Squadron headquarters and an echelon. The main problem was that only 40% of the RCD Cougars were operational due to lack of spares. Many parts had to be scavenged from 'B' Squadron. Sights were flown in from the LdSH, 76mm gun parts came from 12 RBC, all to get one squadron ready to go. On the plus side, the Bison eight-wheeled APC was coming into service, something which the echelon appreciated since it got three of them plus a Grizzly. Two Bison ambulances and two Bison recovery vehicles were brought into the Squadron, even though they were untested prototype machines. A Bison-mounted mortar platoon from 1 RCR was also added, also operating in untested prototypes.

Initially 'A' Squadron was supposed to deploy by sea. This changed and the Cougars and Bisons were loaded aboard American C-5B Galaxies (nine per aircraft) for the long haul to Africa in January 1993, the first time such an operational deployment was made since the LdSH flew the Lynx troop into Cyprus in 1974. On arrival, the Dragoons entered a world that, according to 'A' Squadron's Officer Commanding Major Mike Kampmann was

bizarre. It was surreal. Somalia was a post-apocalyptic nightmare, right out of the movie Mad Max. The 'Technical's' drove around in an array of vehicles: we saw 106mm recoil-less rifles mounted on the backs of Nissans and twin 30mm anti-aircraft guns lashed to the beds of deuce and half trucks. There vast numbers of mortars and RPG's present. The supposedly 'backwards' Somali factional units had T-54's, T-34/85's, M-47's, M-113's, Italian APC's, and even a few Centurions. Most of all the Somali armoured vehicles I saw

were operational, but the whole war effort was stalled because of a lack of gas, so the factions would fight over fuel as well as food and ethnicity.

After the RCD squadron settled in at the Mogadishu airfield, the Airborne Regiment conducted an airmobile operation to seize the Belet Uen. The overall concept of operations was that the UNITAF forces would secure all airfields in the designated zone and the humanitarian aid would flow by air. Once on the ground, the aid convoys would be escorted into more permissive environments around the airfields and distributed (hopefully).

However, the plan did not take into account the fact that the Airborne Regiment would have to leave its Grizzlies behind in Mogadishu. Therefore, the RCD had to not only move these vehicles from Mogadishu to Belet Uen, the squadron also had to reconnoiter and secure the 150-mile route. The initial reconnoiter was done with a Maritime Command Sea King "doing the Apocalypse Now" with Dragoons on board and a C-9 machine gun bungee cord mounted in the open door, followed by the Cougars on the ground which were also supported by two USMC Sea Cobra attack helicopters. After the lead vehicles came under fire by a local faction, the Cobras 'dissuaded' them from continuing their activities.

By mid-January 1993, 'A' Squadron was assigned a zone around Matabaan, a town near the disputed and thus dangerous Ethiopian border. Unlike the Airborne Regiment ensconced in Belet Uen, 'A' Squadron and its attached U.S. Special Forces 'A' Team had to deal with a front line area between the SNF and USC forces. The humanitarian relief zone covered an area which had part of the battle zone in it: opposing forces were in frequent contact along the line and the Leavenworth- and Sandhurst-trained Somali officers conducted mechanized operations using communications equipment which was superior to that used by the Canadian contingent.

There were innumerable incidents involving 'A' Squadron. There were frequent mine strikes which in many cases damaged or destroyed the Cougars but not their crews. One particularly memorable action involved an attempt to contact an SNF-held town called Balenbale. As the Cougars advanced (they had by this time been reorganized into six-car reconnoiter troops) they came under fire from 120mm mortars, 106mm recoilless rifles, and an

M-47 tank. The Cougar crews lased their target and prepared to fire, but the problem was the number of civilians in the built up area where the fire was coming from. Fortunately the translator reached the village elders and the SNF forces ceased fire. Out of this action came a general ceasefire between the SNF and the USC factions in the area which permitted humanitarian relief to flow.

Back in Mogadishu, a security requirement demanded that the Canadian contingent headquarters receive more security. On 7 March 1993, the RCD Assault Troop led by Captain Rich Moreau landed at Mogadishu airfield. Formed into a 44-man Defence and Security Platoon, Assault Troop received three Bisons and set about handling its tasks which included perimeter and vital point security for the Joint Task Force Headquarters in the U.S. Embassy compound and the Canadian airhead.

Operations 'Harmony' and 'Cavalier': UNPROFOR, 1992-1995

The most significant Canadian Army operational deployments in the 1990s were to the Balkans. The reasons for the breakup of Yugoslavia too complex and nuanced to examine in detail here. Suffice it to say, the death of Tito in 1980 initiated the breakup. Without the strong hand of this leader on the helm, Yugoslavia's diverse ethnic matrix could not hold together as generations-old grudges and individual political agendas propelled a descent into a horror not seen on European soil since the Second World War. 'Ethnic Cleansing' was the byword of the day, with thousands of civilians driven from their homes.

The instability in the Balkans threatened the newly-won peace in Eastern Europe. Throughout 1991 NATO was concerned that violence would break out in other parts of the continent and drag the West into the conflagration. A number of avenues were attempted. The Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe, in conjunction with the European Community, formed a monitor mission (which included Canadian Army monitors) but it proved incapable of stemming the tide. The newly-revitalized Western European Union could not reach consensus on how an intervention force should be

structured. This left the UN, which was brought in to handle a ceasefire between newly independent Croatia and the Federal Government of Yugoslavia.

The initial mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in 1992 was to disarm and protect the populations of four enclaves in Croatia, a number of which were dominated by Krajinian Serbs. 4 Canadian Mechanized Brigade in Lahr was instructed to prepare a contingent to deploy to Sector West in Croatia in the Spring of 1992.

The initial recce confirmed that the situation was completely unlike the dominant Canadian Army model of peacekeeping: Croatia was not Cyprus. There was a tentative peace, but this was being used as time to rest, reorganize, and re-equip by all factions. All factions, Croatian and Serb alike, were armed with all types of death-dealing instruments short of biological and nuclear weapons. The cease-fire was totally tentative in some areas because of geographical isolation.

The original Operation 'Harmony' plan formulated by CFE and HQ 4 CMB envisioned a mechanized infantry battalion mounted in M-113's, several TOW Under Armour vehicles, three troops of Leopard tanks from 8th Hussars, and the 8th Hussars Recce Squadron. This plan went to the DCDS where it was stopped. People in the DCDS organization simply did not understand the nature of the environment and disregarded MGen Clive Addy and BGen Lewis Mackenzie's advice to 'go heavy' in part out of being overly concerned about potential political effects in the UN rather than the protection of Canadian troops. Eventually the plan evolved where the tanks were taken out. Then the recce squadron was removed, much to the chagrin of 'A' Squadron, 8th Hussars in Lahr (Blue Berets were apparently nailed to wall of a pub favoured by the Hussars). In the end, a mixed Royal Canadian Regiment-Royal 22nd Regiment force from 4 CMB, dubbed CANBAT 1, deployed from Lahr to Sector West in Croatia in the spring of 1992.

While the situation in Croatia was stabilizing, the tri-ethnic political entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina collapsed into terror. Sarajevo, which was UNPROFOR's 'rear area' base and headquarters zone, quickly became the hub of the violence as the Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims vied for control of this vital political and transport hub. CANBAT 1 was then brought in from Croatia to secure the airport and protect UN and

non-government organization aid efforts in the middle of what amounted to a three-way Bosnian civil war.

The UN decided to create UNPROFOR II for Bosnia. Its mandate was totally different from UNPROFOR I in that the Bosnia operation was designed to escort aid convoys and protect sanctioned humanitarian efforts within certain regions of Bosnia. In theory, the UN had freedom of movement. In fact, the situation was so localized that well-armed villages of one persuasion or another would hijack food from the UN, while rogue bands would ambush and kill UNHCR drivers. All three belligerents, short of fuel and transport, would simply take UN trucks away, re-paint and use them for their own operations. In general practise, the Bosnian Serbs didn't want the UN forces operating in territory it controlled, while the Bosnian Croats and Muslims favoured having the UN present to act as a shield and as political device for use against the Serbs.

The UN, therefore, wanted a force structure that could deter such acts while at the same time they wanted a force structure that wasn't 'provocative' to the ATGM- and tank-armed belligerents. Some contributing nations caved in and sent units equipped with wheeled APCs and no anti-armour capability. Denmark, on the other hand, brought a complete squadron of Leopard A3 main battle tanks, much to the dismay of the diplomats safely ensconced at UN headquarters in New York.

Canadian military and political officials compromised and decided to send a mechanized infantry battlegroup with a squadron of Cougar tank trainers to act as armoured cars. The first Bosnia deployment, Operation 'Cavalier', took place in November 1992. CANBAT 2 was based on 2 RCR from CFB Gagetown and 'A' Squadron, 12 RBC which was organized as a Cougar recce squadron with three seven-car troops. The 2 RCR Battlegroup moved from Canada by ship to the Adriatic and then on to UNPROFOR I's Sector West and was held up there when drawn out negotiations between the UN and the belligerents blocked its deployment into Bosnia. In essence, the battlegroup was supposed to go to Banja Luka, deep in the Bosnian Serb-controlled zone.

While negotiations continued, the volatile situation in Bosnia threatened to spill over into Macedonia, which in turn requested a UN presence to deter ethnic violence. A composite UN force drawn from UNPROFOR was re-named United Nations

Preventative Deployment (UNPREDEP) and 2 RCR Battlegroup sent a mechanized infantry company and a 12 RBC recce troop to patrol the Macedonian border.

After this company group had departed, CANBAT II was ordered into Bosnia. Instead of Banja Luka, it went to Visoko, just north of Sarajevo. Camp Visoko would be the location of subsequent CANBAT II rotations for the next three years. This was a very dangerous area since all three factions converged into it. 2 RCR Battlegroup now had the responsibility of escorting convoys through this vital area, particularly the vital Sarajevo-Tuzla route to northern Bosnia. 'A' Squadron's Cougars were kept busy making sure UNHCR got through.

In May 1993, 'D' Squadron, 12 RBC deployed to Bosnia as part of the 2 R22eR Battlegroup, the new CANBAT II. The area around Visoko was heating up again, particularly the road between Muslim-held Visoko and Croat-held Kiseljak. This road was part of the UNHCR's main supply route which ran through the Croat-held but Muslim surrounded Kiseljak Pocket. This supply route was also subject to fire from the Serb side of the line. As Lt Stephane Gagnon, a Troop Leader with 'D' Sqn, recalled:

We had to make sure this road stayed clear. We had to do what we called 'overwatch'. It was kind of like a mounted OP. We had to watch the Bosnian Serbs and, if they were firing at UN convoys on the main road, we were there to respond. We'd put a patrol of two vehicles on this task and then move the other patrol down the road. We were static on the side of the road, maintaining observation and keeping our 76mm's aimed at the Serb gun positions. The closest Serb bunker was at 1350 metres and they would engage with a .50 cal machine gun....If its very aggressive fire, your only choice is to fire the main gun, but only as a last resort. I never had to do this, though I loaded up a lot in some situations. I usually loaded cannister in the chamber.

By the next CANBAT II rotation in November 1993, the powers that be determined that there were not enough assets for convoy escort and that there was unacceptable wear and tear on the infantry battalion's M-113 fleet. Therefore CANBAT II's organization was converted to an armoured battlegroup which consisted of two Cougar squadrons set up as recce squadrons with three seven-car troops, a mechanized infantry

company in M-113, and a small engineer squadron. A Field Surgical Team rounded out the organization.

The first armoured regiment to command CANBAT II was 12 RBC led by LCol David Moore. 116 of the 700 men of the two 12 RBC squadrons deployed were drawn from all of the Militia armoured regiments in Quebec, while the Van Doos supplied an infantry company. After moving into the 'Big Four' and 'Crystal Palace' buildings at Camp Visoko, the situation in the Kiseljak Pocket worsened. Essentially, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims were fighting each other in several locations in Central Bosnia, while the Bosnian Serbs looked on and made preparations to exploit the situation. The Bosnian Serbs would not allow UN forces to be stationed in areas under their control and would hamper UN aid convoys moving through their areas, usually in the vital Visoko region since this was the main road between the UN-held airport in Sarajevo and northern (Muslim-held) Bosnia. In two cases, soldiers from the 12 RBC Battlegroup were disarmed and taken hostage. In one of these incidents, the Canadian soldiers were subjected to a humiliating mock execution.

The larger UN strategy was to get the Croat and Muslim factions to make peace so they could present a unified front to the Serb faction. An example had to be made and the Kiseljak Pocket was selected to be that example. 12 RBC battlegroup was given the task of ensuring that the Croat forces in the Pocket and the Muslim forces surrounding them effected a disengagement. This would allow another supply route through Kiseljak to be opened and thus the UN would not have to rely on Serb good will to allow aid convoys to move to northern Bosnia. After a great deal of effort, the operation was a success.

By this point, the battlegroup became aware of the existence of two federal psychiatric hospitals located in the hills overlooking the Kiseljak Pocket. Drin and Bacovici had been abandoned by their staffs since both facilities lay in the path of see-saw fighting. The decision was made to deploy a force to protect the hospitals. Sgt G.P Stevenson was awarded the Military Service Cross for his actions taken to defend the compounds from Croatian forces which tried to rush them.

As the Kiseljak Pocket disengagement operation was in its final stages, there was increasing concern that the Serbs would use their self-propelled artillery to disrupt the process. These guns were also being used to bombard Sarajevo from positions within the

Canadian area of operations but outside the Sarajevo Exclusion Zone. Operation 'High Jump' was generated by acting CO Maj Marcel Beaudry and his staff to drive these weapons out and away from Sarajevo. 'B' Squadron, led by Maj Louis Meloche and supported by British special operations forces, seized the Serb-controlled bridge, while engineers disarmed the explosives. 'A' Squadron, and the Van Doos infantry company infiltrated Serb-held territory and confronted the self-propelled artillery. The situation turned into a tense 'Mexican Standoff' once the Sarajevo Corps reaction force arrived with its M-84 main battle tanks and faced off against the Cougars. Negotiations were then completed to remove the Serb guns from the area and the situation returned to normal.

12 RBC Battlegroup was replaced in May 1994 by the Strathconas, led by LCol Ray Wlasichuk, who had previously served with distinction in the European Community Monitor Mission. The LdSH Battlegroup consisted of two Cougar squadrons organized into three seven-car recce troops and the RHQ. The mech infantry company was provided by 'B' Company, PPCLI. Due to previous command and control issues, a new manoeuvre unit called Combat Support Squadron was formed. Combat Support Squadron pooled the Strathcona RHQ Recce Troop (11 M-113's with the ACAV additional armour package and machine guns) with a Mortar Platoon from 1 RCHA mounted in six M-113 mortar vehicles, all under the command of an armoured officer. Combat Support Squadron also included a TOW Under Armour Troop of eight vehicles. The TOW troop crews were drawn from the Strathcona's 'A' Squadron. Notably, add-on armour packages were attached to the AVGP series vehicles to make them more resistant to .50 calibre machinegun fire.

The Strathcona Battle Group also had five Tactical Air Control Party teams equipped with laser designators and ground-air communications. An additional asset came from JTF-2, which provided a 'brick' for special operations. This was added after a number of hostage incidents involving Canadian troops had occurred on previous rotations and these men remained under the command of the Canadian contingent commander in Zagreb. Notably, many members of JTF-2 had originally been armoured soldiers before volunteering for "The Wind".

The operational situation in the region when the Strathcona's arrived was poor. CANBAT II lacked credibility with the Bosnian Serbs after the Mexican Standoff

incident. Though the Kiseljak Pocket was now quiet, the Muslim-Serb confrontation line in the area was extremely active. Aid convoy movement which normally transited the Serb areas was seriously impeded and then halted. It was critical that conditions for peace be generated. UNPROFOR had to move beyond convoy escort in the Muslim and Croat-held areas which resulted in a fundamental change in UNPROFOR II's strategy.

The Visoko-Kiseljak-Ilijas area remained critical. It was vital that the UN forces developed a relationship with the Bosnian Serbs to counterbalance the existing partial relationship it had with the other two belligerents. To achieve this aim, LCol Wlasichuk was able to negotiate the placement of an OP line into BSA-held territory between Ilijas and Visoko. This in turn led to an agreement by both sides not to target the civilian population, though military targets were acceptable. The Strathcona battlegroup then put OPs on a hospital in Visoko and a school in Ilijas so that any violations could be monitored and brought to the table by the battlegroup to the local Serb and Muslim commanders. The belligerents were also told that if the OPs were shelled, NATO airstrikes would be used in retaliation.

This process took time. It eventually led to enough stability so that the route to Sarajevo could be opened. A Strathcona recce troop then escorted a fifteen truck aid convoy through this Serb-held area while the whole route was overwatched by the OP line. There was one convoy, then another. And a third. Eventually it became a normal event, and power restoration, prisoner exchanges and other confidence building measures followed, all facilitated by the Strathconas.

Another important role carried out by the Strathcona battlegroup was the continual monitoring of the northwestern portion of the Sarajevo Exclusion Zone to ensure that BSA artillery in the Canadian AOR was not used against Sarajevo and to call in NATO airpower if it was.

The Strathconas then turned to deal with other problems. The Muslim-held town of Breza, opposite of Ilijas, received routine shelling from the BSA, usually in retaliation for cross-confrontation line night attacks conducted by Muslim light infantry. The Breza hospital was treating between 150-200 casualties per day. Local artillery duels threatened the fragile Ilijas-Visoko relationship. Another UN OP was put into Breza and it

conducted dismounted patrols. A 'mirror' OP was established on the Serb side. If there were violations, these were brought to the negotiating table for resolution.

Then the situation deteriorated once again. In one incident, WO Tom Martineau was shot in his OP by a Muslim sniper and paralysed. Being in the middle with blue helmets was not safe by any stretch of the imagination, as historian David Bercuson noted in his book Significant Incident,

On the night of July 15, Sgt Tom Hoppe and his TOW Troop were again positioned at [OP] Charlie One. This time they had three M-113s parked above the Muslim trenches. A UN flag was flying, illuminated by a spotlight. Cpl Darren Magas had just dismounted one of the vehicles at about [2300 hrs]...."The Serbs opened up machine-gun fire just over the top of the tents...this was about 150, 200 rounds. It was just non-stop" he recalled. "MCpl Phil Ward was outside the tents when the shooting began. He yelled at the men inside to stay down, then dashed around the corner of the position. "I could see a muzzle blast from just behind the tree line...." Ward then mounted one of the APCs and got the engine started. With the bullets cracking around him, he waited for someone to get the other two moving. The machine-gun fire intensified as the Moslems began to shoot back at the Serb positions. Both sides poured fire into Charlie One. Trooper Jason Skilliter ran out of his tent, grabbed his machine gun, and sprawled on the ground facing a Moslem bunker. The he opened up on the bunker's firing slit. When the shooting from the bunker stopped for a moment, he and Hoppe ran to the other two APCs, got them started, then began to move them out of the line of fire. With Ward's APC as a rear guard, Hoppe and Skilliter then led the troop of the hill and out of danger.

Sgt Hoppe would later receive the Meritorious Service Cross for this action and a Medal of Bravery for rescuing three Muslim children who were under fire in the Visoko cemetery, while Tpr Skilliter would also get the Medal of Bravery.

Not having tanks or mechanized infantry combat vehicles in CANBAT II limited the unit's ability to conduct some operations. A failed Muslim assault on a BSA defensive position northeast of Visoko resulted in severe retaliatory bombardment from the BSA. An UNMO was killed and Malaysian Battalion's (MALBAT) OP's were subjected to fire.

Lacking vehicles which could operate under such conditions meant that a company of British Warrior MICV's had to be employed to exert a UN presence and calm things down. In another case Canada's armoured soldiers could only look on with envy when the Danish Leopard squadron destroyed five BSA tanks in a series of engagements near Tuzla.

The Dragoons relieved the Strathconas in October 1994. Under the command of LCol Bill Brough, the RCD Battlegroup organization was slightly different. One of the two Cougar squadrons was retrained as a mechanized infantry company and equipped with Grizzly. Thus, the RCD Battlegroup retained one Cougar squadron, one Grizzly squadron, a mechanized infantry company from 2 RCR, Combat Support Squadron, the engineer contingent, and the field surgical team. More members of "The Wind" augmented the battlegroup.

At this point in the Bosnia conflict, RCD Battlegroup's area of operations was extremely active. The mission remained ambiguous, as it had been all along: the RCD was to provide protection to humanitarian relief operations. The problem was that the Visoko-Ilijas area was a very important transportation hub for all three factions. Further north in the mountains, the BiH muslims were attempting to grab the Smrska Plina [cfm] area. That AOR at one point counted 5000 shotreps in 25 hours: one of these shotreps included 700 rounds of 122mm fire. In the Breza area, these multiple cross line engagements, all dismounted night operations. The town of Visko itself lay in a bowl of hills and there was regular Serb sniping and heavy weapons fire from the hills into the town. The RCD also took over the OP line which the Strathconas had been able to place along the ridge from Visoko between the Muslim and BSA lines near Breza, and then to the Serb town of Ilijas.

RCD Battlegroup put a lot of effort into stabilizing the area through local negotiation. The UN campaign plan, once it was disseminated, indicated that the conditions for peace be created wherever possible. Thus, the battlegroup spent a lot of time negotiating with both belligerents to move their headquarters assets out of those schools and hospitals, and ensuring that the schools and hospitals were equipped to do their normal tasks. Distribution of some humanitarian aid was removed from the overly-centralized and

corrupt UN distribution agencies and the RCD ensured that it reached its intended destination.

Then things started to go wrong in November 1994. Something irritated the Serb high command and General Ratko Mladic himself came to Iliyas and ordered the local commander to seal off the border at OP MIKE. This left an entire RCD squadron cut off from its OPs on the Serb side of the line. The men in the OPs were not allowed to leave and the other support personnel were collected and held in two locations in Iliyas. Resupply was not allowed.

Incredibly, UN command instructed CANBAT II not to prepare for any action to rescue the trapped Canadians. LCol Brough and the staff of the RCD Battlegroup were not going to allow the 'Iliyas 55' be hung out to dry and formulated a plan which would be implemented if the Serbs either started killing Canadians or if they publicly humiliated Canadian soldiers. Using the Canadian chain of command and having friends in high places at NATO HQ in Naples, the RCD operations staff developed a 40-plane airstrike package with 86 targets between Visoko and Iliyas (one battalion of 122mm SP guns, a 152 mm towed artillery battalion, a battalion of tanks, and the power grid). A special task organization was placed in one hour notice to move. One JTF-2 contingent would seize the bridge at OP MIKE, while 'B' Squadron under Major Ron Puddiston would make the run from the border to Iliyas. The airstrikes would go in simultaneously. A second JTF-2 group would storm the two holding areas and the OP crews would extract with 'B' Squadron. The operation was to be conducted at night and was estimated to take less than an hour.

The hostage crisis continued for 16 days and luckily for the Serbs, they didn't try anything with the hostages. Then for some reason Ratko Mladic ordered that Camp Visoko be rocketed. Several 25-pound M-63 rockets impacted in the area, one landing right next to the main barracks building. Nobody was injured by sheer luck. Then the Muslims blockaded the camp to make the RCD a better target for their own propaganda purposes.

The RCD response was to order the deployed sub-units to establish road blocks and close all routes emanating from Visoko. This shut down all humanitarian aid to north Bosnia and prevented the Bosnian Muslim army from resupplying its offensive

operations further north. Several 'Mexican standoffs' with RPGs and machine guns were reported, but the men of the RCD battlegroup were not in the mood to be pushed around. The Muslims relented and backed down. Then the Serbs released the 'Iliyas 55'.

The RCD Battlegroup regularly supported other UNPROFOR II contingents. Continuing Serb operations threatened a UN supply route over Mount Ingman west of Sarajevo. A 30mm anti-aircraft gun was moved into the area by the BSA and it destroyed several vehicles from a number of aid convoys, but the French Battalion was unable to engage it with their weapons due to the ranges involved. Combat Support Squadron deployed TOW Under Armour vehicles to take out the gun. On arrival in their firing positions, the gun was permanently removed by the BSA and the route was reopened.

In another incident an emplaced BSA T-55 fired several rounds into a hospital occupied by British UN troops, wounding six and amputating the legs of a seventh. BRITCAVBAT's Scimitar vehicles did not have the capability to destroy the T-55, so a TOW Under Armour section was brought in. Three rounds were fired at the tank and aerial recce photos showed a Serb ambulance evacuating its wounded and dead crewmen.

The situation in Croatia and Bosnia deteriorated so badly by April 1995 that serious consideration was given to withdrawing both UNPROFOR I and UNPROFOR II. The NATO members which contributed forces to both operations decided that any withdrawal would be conducted under NATO military auspices, a plan called Operation 'Determined Effort'. A withdrawal of UN forces from northern Bosnia to the ports in the south on the Adriatic coast meant that CANBAT II with its Cougars and TOW Under Armour vehicles and BRITCAVBAT with its Scimitars would have to hold the 'door' near Visoko open. This was a dangerous proposition, given the fact that the belligerents possessed main battle tanks, multiple rocket launching artillery, and ATGM's of all types.

The NATO force would have two major components. The first would be brought in by air to secure several airheads from which non-military UN organizations would be evacuated. The second component would land and secure port facilities on the Adriatic and assist UNPROFOR forces to extract from them.

The Canadian contingent for Contingency Plan 'Cobra' was to consist of a battle group of three mechanized companies in M-113's, a Leopard tank squadron, a recce squadron, and an M-109 SP artillery battery. Both HMCS Provider and HMCS Preserver, plus four

helicopter-carrying destroyers and a squadron of CF-18 fighter bombers were also part of the NATO force.

Fortunately the operation did not have to be executed. Diplomatic breakthroughs and Croatia's military offensive in the fall of 1995 resulted in the replacement of the UNPROFOR missions with a NATO force.

IFOR and SFOR, 1995-1999

The decreasing credibility of UNPROFOR to perform its tasks under the very confused and contradictory mandate was brought to a head in the fall of 1995. Croatian forces, backed by the United States, initiated a successful offensive into the UN Protected Areas in Croatia, overrunning UNPROFOR forces there and driving the Serbs out. At the same time, the Bosnian Serbs overran the Srebrenica UN protected area and 'ethnically cleansed' the predominantly Muslim population there. Only skilfull diplomacy and a real ceasefire coupled with the deployment of elements of the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (with airpower) to Sarajevo prevented a total collapse of the West's position in the region. The Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. It was now time for NATO to take over and the UN to bow out.

The new NATO force was to take over from UNPROFOR II in Bosnia: UNPROFOR I ceased to exist, though a rump UN command was kept in Eastern Slavonia. Dubbed the NATO Implementation Force , IFOR operated with a wider mandate, was equipped with heavy equipment like tanks and attack helicopters, and had unrestricted freedom of movement in Bosnia.

Three multinational divisions were deployed, with the Canadian contingent forming part of Multinational Division South West. The number of Canadians deployed to the region were drastically reduced to 1000. The force planners had to create another miniature battlegroup, in addition to a Brigade Headquarters and a logistics battalion. The first Canadian IFOR contingent, Operation 'Alliance', consisted of a brigade headquarters, an RCR infantry company group, an engineers squadron, a field surgical team and, last

but not least, an armoured recce squadron from the RCD. The RCD squadron was equipped with three recce troops of seven Cougars each, plus several Bison variants for the echelon. Two Leopards were supposed to deploy with 'A' Squadron for mine clearance taskings, but these vehicles did not proceed to Bosnia. 'A' Squadron's personnel were drawn from all of the other squadrons in the Regiment. It deployed in December 1995 where it operated as the Brigade recce squadron.

In general terms, 'A' Squadron conducted sector recce patrols with the ultimate aim of monitoring compliance western Bosnia. In many cases, RCD personnel uncovered heavy weapons that were supposed to be placed in cantonments watched by NATO forces. The belligerent forces, in this case the BiH Muslim Armija and the Bosnian Serb Army, were stashing unreported weapons around the countryside for future operations. IFOR also observed the ceasefire lines and handled traditional peacekeeping tasks. Notably, 1st troop led by Capt Brian Power conducted an NBCD recce in an area where nerve agent use by a belligerent force was suspected.

'A' Squadron 12 RBC took over in June 1996. At that time the search was on for war criminals and NATO forces were authorized to track down individuals identified by the UN justice system. Cordon and searches became the norm with 12 RBC's Cougars providing perimeter security for some of these operations.

IFOR's one year mandate eventually ran out. Optimists believed that IFOR could bring peace to the region, but more experienced observers knew that once on the ground, the West was in for the long haul, much like Cyprus. IFOR's replacement was Supplementary Force (SFOR) which was smaller in that each of the three multinational divisions were replaced with multinational brigade groups. From 1997 to today, the Dragoons, Strathconas, and the 12 RBC deployed a squadron every six months for Operation 'Palladium' tours in Bosnia and, like Cyprus in the 1980s, there appears to be no end in sight. Cordon and searches will continue, firing incidents and mines will put soldier's lives at risk, there will be boredom in the OPs, and the universe will continue to unfold as it should.

There were notable exceptions. For example, in December 1998, the Canadian SFOR battlegroup based around 3 RCR and including 'A' Squadron RCD conducted Operation 'Shannon' near Martin Brod in Bosnia. Croatian forces were illegally occupying a section

of Bosnian territory near the Una River and the battlegroup was tasked to perform an operation similar to Operation 'High Jump'. Supported by A-10 attack aircraft, Spectre gunships, and a squadron of F-16's (there was a squadron of Croatian M-84 MBT's located nearby), Major Mike Nixon's squadron, TUA vehicles, and an RCR platoon crossed the bridge and surrounded the main Croatian-held building, and then spread out to deter Croatian forces from reinforcing the area. Croat patrols were turned back in the glare of searchlights mounted on Cougars, while roving mounted patrols led by Lt Phil Halton established the line of the 'new' border crossing zone.

Domestic Operations

Canada's armoured soldiers were involved in at least two major assistance to the civil authority missions during the 1990s. The first of these was the Manitoba Flood. In April 1997, a major snowstorm in the northern United States was followed by unseasonably war weather which in turn produced widespread flooding in southern Manitoba. Evacuations started on 21 April. The situation was worse than expected and a Joint Force HQ was establish to coordinate CF flood operations. Operation 'Assistance' then commenced. By 12 May, 5 785 CF personnel, the bulk drawn from Land Force units, were transported to southern Manitoba and Winnipeg. Amongst these forces were soldiers from all three Canada-based regular armoured regiments and all of the Western Canada and some Ontario Militia regiments. Traditional military operational techniques were applied during Op 'Assistance'. For example, 'dyke recces' were conducted to ensure that the line was held. Armed patrols were sent into evacuated areas to prevent looting, while many were involved in filling and laying snadbags in stricken areas. Citizens who were cut off on higher ground had to be rescued. Bison APCs, which are amphibious, were also used to great effect in all phases of the operation. By mid-May, the water levels had dropped sufficeintly so that clean up could begin. Again, Canada's armoured soldiers helped to get the population back on its feet.

An even more destructive natural event ocurred in January 1998. A massive ice storm pelted an area extending from Kingston, Ontario to Ottawa to well north of Montreal, PQ

and then into the Maritimes. Hydro lines crashed down throughout the bitterly cold nights and over three million people were without power. Roads were blocked from downed trees and telephone poles. Sheets of ice made walking almost impossible. Then the temperature dropped to below thirty degrees. The situation was so dire that the bulk of Canada's land forces were deployed to the region. This deployment once again included all of the regular armoured units and the armoured units from Ontario and Quebec. Later, even more Militia personnel from Newfoundland and Western Canada were deployed to help. The tasks were enormous. Roads had to be cleared and temporary patches to the power grid had to be made. Many soldiers went door to door and farm to farm in the more isolated rural areas to chop wood for fireplaces and to see if the elderly or sick needed assistance. Assistance to local police forces was also carried out to deter looting and hijacking of trucks carrying generators. After several weeks, Operation 'Recuperation' wound down as the weather improved and the power system was re-started.

The Leopard C-2 Upgrade

The demise of the MBT replacement programme forced the Army to examine its options related to future direct fire support. In December 1992, a two tier approach was approved by DND. One tier would look at the Armour Combat Vehicle option, while the other would examine life extension for the Leopard C-1. The armour community was split. One faction thought the government would never allow a Leopard upgrade and that the Army should go for the ACV, which would probably be a wheeled vehicle which would operate alongside the LAV-25/Coyote recon vehicle. The other faction was less pessimistic and thought a Leopard Life Extension (LLE) was feasible.

The LLE project was approved by Treasury Board in December 1995. It was to consist of four modules: a thermal sight, improved ordnance, applique armour, and an electric turret control system. The money was then cut back and the priority became the thermal sight, which was approved in 1996. Then-Minister of National Defence visited the Strathconas on an exercise in Suffield while they were preparing to deploy for COP

'Cobra.' When asked, the troopers told Collenette what and why they needed better armour. In one of his last acts as Minister, Collonette approved the LLE.

The Conventional Forces in Europe disarmament regime, as we have seen, mandated the scrapping or removal of large numbers of NATO MBT's from Europe. Consequently, the Germans were withdrawing many of their Leopard 1A5 vehicles from service. One hundred and twenty three of these surplus vehicles were acquired by Canada in a complex swap arrangement with GLS, a subsidiary of Krauss Maffei. Canada retained the Leopard C-1 hull, while GLS took the Leopard C-1 turrets for use as spares for the Australian Army. The Leopard 1A5 hulls were disposed of by GLS, while the 1A5 turrets were modified and then mated to the Leopard C-1 hulls. Modifications included new Canadian radios, better crew configuration, and a muzzle reference system for the gun. This vehicle is known as the Leopard C-2. There were few blocks to the project, which was brought in on time and on budget.

The Coyote Howels

The demise of the Canadian Combat Vehicle (CCV-90) project in 1989 put the whole idea of a Lynx replacement into suspended animation. There was, however, recognition that the requirement for such a vehicle would not disappear. Therefore, the Multi-Role Combat Vehicle (MRCV) project was stood up in 1990. The MRCV concept was to have three vehicle types using the same chassies: an MICV for the infantry, a Cougar replacement, and a Lynx replacement. At this point, there was no firm decision on whether this family of vehicles would be wheeled or tracked. The MRCV staff, led by LCol Ross Carruthers, was able to 'piggy back' onto Norwegian vehicles trial, a project which had the same objectives as the MRCV project. The contending vehicles were all tracked and either mounted or planned to mount a 30mm cannon. These machines were the Bradley, Warrior, the German Puma, Austria's ASCOD, and the Swedish CV-90. The CV-90 looked good to the MRCV team.

Enter General Motors Diesel Division, the only producer of armoured vehicles in Canada which, in addition to employing several thousand Canadians in southern Ontario,

also had contracts to build the LAV-25 wheeled family of vehicles for the U.S. Marine Corps. The MRCV team did not think LAV-25 would meet the stated MRCV requirements, particularly in terms of up-armouring and up-gunning over time. The highest levels of DND started to pester the MRCV staff to alter their requirements and examine the LAV-25. In 1992, ADM(Mat) and the DCDS essentially ordered the MRCV team to cancel MRCV development but that a Lynx replacement project would continue and that it would be based on the LAV-25.

Initially, Deputy Minister Robert Fowler only permitted an off the shelf LAV-25 buy with no modifications. The main problem with this policy was safety since LAV-25 had a hydraulic turret system. Combat experience since 1973 had demonstrated that hydraulic fluid was flammable and thus a hazard for the crew. The team wanted an electric turret traverse system which was subsequently vetoed by the Deputy Minister. The team worked around this block by ignoring it and ensured that the electric traverse system was included in the requirements and 229 vehicles were authorized (this was later reduced to 203 so that more money could be spent on enhancement of the recce capability).

Two major projects were necessary. The new recce vehicle had to have an up to the minute sophisticated sensor and surveillance system. Then that system had to be integrated with the hull and turret systems, which would be improved over the existing ten-year old LAV-25 basic machine.

The final version of Coyote consisted of an improved LAV-25 hull with a M-242 25mm bushmaster automatic cannon mounted in the turret as well as a coaxial C-6 7.62mm machine gun and a pintle-mounted C-6 for the crew commander. The smoke dischargers are also capable of firing fragmentation devices for local protection. The Coyote has an advanced threat warning system which tells the crew if the vehicle is being illuminated by a laser designator and from what direction it is coming from.

The Coyote's sensor systems include a 10 metre mast with a ground surveillance radar capable of detecting tanks at ranges of 12 kilometres. Also integral to the mast package is a thermal imager and a visible spectrum camera. Coyote also has two autonomous dismountable systems: another ground surveillance radar and a combination laser range finder, thermal imager and camera. All the surveillance systems are linked to a sensor operator's position in the rear of the vehicle which can share data with adjacent vehicles

or link the data back to higher headquarters in the rear. The entire sensor package is dismountable from the Coyote chassis.

The introduction of Coyote and the Leopard C-2 altered the fundamental structure of the Canadian armoured regiments. By the summer of 1999, the three remaining regular force armoured regiments consisted of three squadrons, an RHQ and an RHQ Recce Troop. 'A' Squadron, called the Cavalry Squadron in the RCD and LdSH, consisted of four four-car Coyote troops operating in the DFSV role. These Coyotes did not have the sophisticated sensor suite with mast. 'B' Squadron was a traditional tank squadron equipped with Leopard C-2. Recce Squadron had three five-car Coyote troops plus an Assault Troop mounted in Bisons. These Coyotes, plus the Coyotes in the RHQ Recce Troop, were equipped with the sensor package. The plan was to adopt the new Armoured Combat Vehicle (in whatever form it takes, wheels or tracks) into the 'A' Squadrons and move the Coyotes (which will be reequipped with sensors) to Recce Squadron to form seven-car troops instead of the present five-car troops.

Kosovo, 1999

The first operational deployment for Coyote recce vehicles and the upgraded Leopard's occurred in August 1999. The ongoing civil war in the former Yugoslavia surged once again in 1999, this time in the ethnic Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo. Western leaders decided that Kosovo would not be permitted to become another Bosnia. After ultimatums to the Belgrade government, an air campaign was conducted to bring the belligerents to the diplomatic bargaining table. The resultant peace mechanism was the NATO-led Kosovo Force or KFOR.

Canada's contribution to KFOR, which lasted from August 1999 to June 2000, included a Coyote recce squadron, a small infantry-heavy battlegroup, and a tactical helicopter squadron. The battlegroup, based around 1 PPCLI, included a troop of upgraded Leopards from the Strathcona's. The battlegroup was tasked with controlling a specific area of operations, but the recce squadron, based on the Strathcona recce squadron, operated as a brigade asset under the British brigade commanding the rest of

the Canadian forces dedicated to KFOR. The mechanized forces, particularly the Leopards, were used to intimidate the lightly-armed Albanian insurgent factions from fighting amongst themselves and at the same time served, alongside other KFOR armoured forces, as a deterrent to Yugoslav Army intervention.

[add more after KFOR research trip]