

The Stand-up Table

Commentary, Opinion and Rebuttal

Reading in the Postmodern Army

The Army Reading List...

More on this subject from Major Andrew B. Godefroy of the Canadian Forces Joint Space Support Team...

With Major Farrell's opinions about military reading in the postmodern army (*The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* Vol. 5 No. 4 Winter 2002-2003) in response to my comments published in *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* (Vol. 5 No. 3 Fall 2002), I would like to respond with the following comments.

First, I would like to publicly apologize to Major Farrell if it appeared to him that I was launching a personal attack against his character in my last letter. My criticism was intended for and directed at his point of view not him as an individual. That being said, *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* is designed for public debate, and if one writes a piece that is published here, I would only suggest that it is wise to separate ego from script and be prepared to repel boarders (myself included).

That said, the point of the debate between us is essentially this: we disagree on what is the true value, if any, of providing an officially recommended reading list for soldiers who are expected to demonstrate a high degree of general knowledge about their chosen profession. Also, it seems that there is an issue about whom, if anyone, within the Army might be so qualified to compile such a list.

While the former issue requires further discussion below, the latter point may be simply addressed. Aside from clearly identifying himself as an I-don't-need-to-be-told-what-to-read officer (not to be confused with my apparently despised category of people-who-can-select-their-own books), Major Farrell defended his position in his last piece by stating that he was "not interested in the opinion of somebody I don't know at least by reputation." To this I would only offer that it might be a wise move to become more familiar with who the Chief of the Land Staff actually is, given that he is the boss and he officially endorsed the reading list. Granted, his staff was probably responsible for the majority of its compilation, but this should not automatically equate to "useless." We are not talking about a list compiled by Zoolander's School For Kids Who Want

to Read Good; the books listed in *The Canadian Army Reading List (ARL)* were carefully chosen and may also be found in the reading lists of several other professional armies, both allied and otherwise. However, this does not automatically mean that the selected books are "officially" good. That judgement must be left with the reader. What I suspect has happened here is that Major Farrell is indeed a well-read officer, went to the ARL seeking an advanced guide or critique and was disappointed when he found instead the basic manual. So, I would offer that I have not completely missed his point; rather, as I stated previously, he has missed the point of the ARL.

So what then is the point of the ARL, and, perhaps more importantly, why do armies even produce such reading lists in the first place? The practice of encouraging professional soldiers to read about their chosen profession is easily traced back a few centuries. It is a well-known fact that Napoleon was an avid reader, and, despite "his busy schedule as conqueror, administrator, and as emperor, [he] still found time to read a wide variety of books."¹ For example, a few days prior to his departure to assume command of the French Army of Italy in 1796, Napoleon's biographer Vincent Cronin noted that he visited the French National Library to familiarize himself with the geography, politics, and military history of the armies and country he was to conquer.² In particular, Napoleon read *The Memoirs of Marshal de Catinat*, a biography of the Prince Eugene of Savoy, and three volumes about his battles, Saint Simon's *Guerre des Alpes*, and a volume on Jean-Baptiste Francois de Maillebois' Italian campaigns.³ When he moved on to Egypt in 1798, Napoleon repeated the process and included in his three-hundred book library aboard his ship *L'Orient* items such as the Koran, Plutarch, Livy, Virgil and histories of Alexander the Great. Though certainly not ordered to do so, Napoleon easily made the connection between knowledge and power and the professionalism that came with reading and thinking outside the box.

Napoleon also once noted that the trouble with books is that one must read so many bad ones before finding something worthwhile. While perhaps true in the Napoleonic age, it is most certainly true today with an exponentially expanding book market supported by the Internet and other forms of open

source media and information. The poor Canadian Army soldier finds him/herself quickly drowning in the never-ending sea of options. While Major Farrell asserts that this situation supports his argument against the *ARL*, I disagree. It is exactly *because* of this situation and the fact that most, if not all, members in the Canadian Army have a very finite amount of time to read beyond the already insurmountable workload that recommended reading lists have become a crucial asset. Major Tom Bradley made this exact argument in the last issue as well, when he quoted a previous writer in reference to comments about the academic qualities of the officer corps. When explaining why the officer corps does not produce a large volume of academic discussion papers he wrote, "We at all levels in the Canadian Army are becoming so overwhelmed with work, much of which provides little other benefit than to tax the staffs involved."⁴ All of which leaves little precious time for reading, let alone writing.

In addition to saving time, the *ARL* is also meant to provide guidance and perhaps even focus. While Major Farrell may have entered into Army service with good reading habits and self-motivation, I would argue that the majority of our fellow soldiers have not. This is not anyone's fault; rather, critical reading and professional reading is a skill requiring development like anything else. People are not necessarily prone to reading for personal benefit, and lack of time is often mentioned as the reason why one does not read more often. One only has to teach a military history class or two to the engineering students at RMC to quickly discover how little non-technical literature they have read about their profession and how little real motivation there

initially is to even consider reading beyond what is expected for classes and assignments. Those who do wish to read outside the box often complain that they do not know where to even start. I was unable to locate any official reading guide for RMC students beyond what was produced for specific classes, and, for that matter, neither the Canadian Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard or Joint units have any officially published reading lists for their NCMs and officers. Those looking for a bit of authoritative guidance on what might be considered notable or worth reading are unfortunately out of luck. While friends and colleagues can certainly recommend books, if they are equally in the dark about a subject, what sort of advice could possibly be expected?

Contrast Canadian military reading guidance, for example, with that of the *United States Military Academy Officer's Professional Reading Guide*. At just under 89 pages, the annotated bibliography is a comprehensive reference and guide for the young officer candidates' shelf. The introduction to the guide is very candid and succinct, and it clearly points out that the intent of the guide is to get the young soldier started on a reading program at the very beginning of his/her career. It reads, "Clearly, the newly commissioned officer's initial years of service are indeed busy ones; nevertheless, you should be able to find time to read at least one good book a month." Like the *ARL*, it also states, "The books in this volume are merely suggestions." Meanwhile, the *U.S. Army Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List* is broken into four subsections, each designed to address a particular level of command. For example, sub-list 2 is designed for company

grade officers, WO1-CW3, and company cadre NCOs. Yet regardless of the level, its overall message remains the same. It states, "Historically, one of the most important, distinguishing characteristics of outstanding soldiers has been a challenging personal professional development program largely based upon reading." Aside from the Army, every major branch and service in the U.S. Military has an officially recommended reading list, right up to and including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Other than personal reading lists issued out by local commanders, the Canadian Army is the only organization in the CF that I have been able to discover an officially published reading list for.

Beyond the minor dispute between Major Farrell and myself, there are other aspects to military professional reading lists that should be considered. An army that publishes a recommended reading list is making an implied statement about what it thinks is important for its members to know. The fact that the Canadian Army has an official reading list while other organizations within the CF do not demonstrates foresight and perhaps vision not snobbery or ignorance as suggested. While not perfect, the *ARL* is a start, and it demonstrates that someone in the Army (perhaps the CLS, though I only know of him by reputation, so maybe I should be sceptical?) *cares* enough to try to move its members from the left side of the professionalism bar a little more towards the right. Also, other armies will pay close attention to our *ARL*. Just as I have deconstructed some of the American lists here, one can be sure that other militaries are doing the same with our list. Others will perceive what the *ARL*

contains as an indication of who we are as an institution.

In the end, I suspect that Major Farrell's primary concern with the *ARL* is twofold. First, his previous comments suggest he may not care much for the persons responsible for its publication, and second, he feels it is inadequate. While not insinuating anything further regarding the first issue, the second issue is pertinent to this discussion. The *ARL* was first published in September 2001 and is now nearly two years out of date. Several new and important publications have arrived since its compilation, and it is in need of an update. Further recommendations might also be considered. The introduction to using the list may benefit from a more detailed discussion about its purpose (including many of the points listed here), as well as some reference to similar reading lists available elsewhere. The structure could also be improved. While major subject headings remain valid, it may make more sense to create subheadings in order to better organize the list rather than depend completely on listing titles alphabetically by author. For example, opening up to the *ARL* Military Theory section (p. 6) the

first book listed is Christopher Bassford's *Clausewitz in English*. Only further down the page is Clausewitz's own work *On War* listed. It makes little sense to read critiques of the major theorist's work without first actually having read the work itself, and the *ARL* would help novice readers situate themselves better by following a more chronological order in some cases.⁵ As well, rather than a devoted section to Canadian military heritage, create instead a Canadian Literature subheading within each major section of the list. Finally, the *ARL* also does not contain a list of pertinent journals or Internet sites where further information may be obtained.

The publication of the *ARL* signalled recognition of the requirement of the postmodern soldiers to use his/her limited time to its best potential. It was meant to foster personal professional development within the ranks of the Army, was never intended to be exhaustive and will hopefully encourage rather than deter our soldiers from pursuing a reading program. It should be updated in the near future, and, more importantly, perhaps it will encourage other branches in the Canadian Forces to follow suit with their own official reading lists.



ENDNOTES

1. Grossman, Ira. "Napoleon the Reader: The Imperial Years", at URL http://www.napoleon-series.org/research/napoleon/c_read2.html.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. *ADTB* "The Stand Up Table: Commentary, Opinion, and Rebuttal", Vol. 5 No. 4 (Winter 2002-3), pp. 88-89.
5. Thanks to Major Ian Rutherford for offering this point, and it makes sense as I have witnessed army members who are essentially 'going down the list' checking off each item after they have read it.

More commentary on "No Time to Think: Academe and the Officer Corps" *ADTB* Vol 5 No 3, Fall 2002.

In response to Major Tom Bradley's commentary on this editorial (ADTB Vol 5 No 4 Winter 2002-2003), Sergeant Arthur Majoor, currently training for Roto 13 of Op PALLADIUM, writes...

As a frequent contributor to *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, I felt the need to comment on Major Bradley's letter. His comment about the flood of ideas, visions and proposals in the mess is interesting, but these ideas, visions and proposals are really only idle speculation. A visit to any sports bar on a Friday night will also result in a flood of ideas, visions and proposals to make the Montreal Canadians or the

Toronto Maple Leafs contenders for the Stanley Cup, if only....

The audience limits discussions in the mess, or over a coffee at lunch, since most, if not all, of the people present will be part of a small peer group. If a record were to be kept over a period of time, it would soon become apparent that most of what is being said is a rehash of things that have been said before. Most people will slip into a comfortable routine in a social setting and not say or do anything to rock the boat. Writing for a larger audience forces the writer reach out to a largely unknown audience and requires that the material be supported by research and presented in a convincing and logical manner. In essence, writers cannot indulge in idle speculation for the

ADTB or similar journals, they must be able to present a convincing argument and prove their point.

As for the argument that there is no time for writing, I fully sympathize. My duties as the 31 Brigade G6 LAN Manager were incredibly time consuming, interacting with computer users of all skill and knowledge levels, meeting unit and brigade IT requirements and forecasting and fulfilling future needs, seeking information and providing reports and returns up my chain of command, as well as attempting to meet ambitious tactical training plans with wildly inadequate comms resources as a secondary duty. Once the day was completed, I also had two small children to attend to, taking them to and participating in their after school activities. By the time they went to bed and household needs were attended to, it was usually about 10:00PM. My current duties as section commander in Roto 13 look to be equally busy and fulfilling, and I expect to be on a similarly demanding schedule for the foreseeable future.

The point of describing all this activity is that I make the time to

sit down and do research or write at 2200 hrs because I feel that I have something to offer to a wider audience than the few people who bother to show up in the messes I am familiar with, and that engaging with a wider audience can test my ideas, improve my ability to formulate arguments, and expose me to new and different viewpoints. I must confess the evolutionary development of my or anyone else's writing suffers when there are no rebuttals, arguments or counterpoints. The Master Corporal who wrote "An analysis of Strategic Leadership"¹ must have been thrilled to discover his work being used for such an important writing board.² Think how much better his arguments would have been if he had the opportunity to answer intelligent criticism or what new directions well placed counter arguments might have led him to. Instead, he was greeted with silence, and perhaps this response explains why

we have not heard from him again.

Even if my need for self-expression is unusual or extreme, I would still challenge all readers of *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* to make a contribution in writing. Engaging the writers of the papers published in the magazine through the "Stand-up Table," letters to the editor or articles arguing opposing viewpoints will help both sides refine their arguments for and against the item under discussion and help stimulate new thoughts and ideas (one of the side effects of higher education as well). Perhaps the ideas, visions and proposals out there do have some merit; it is now up to the people making them to prove their points to the rest of us.



ENDNOTES

1. MCpl Richard P Thorne, "An Analysis of Strategic Leadership," *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 8-15.
2. Major J.R. Grodzinski, "No time to think: Academe and the Officer," *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Fall 2002), pp. 6-9.

On "The Administrative Estimate in the Operational Planning Process" by Lieutenant-Colonel R. Préfontaine, *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, Vol 5 No 4 (Winter 2002-2003).

Colonel A.F. Markewicz, Commanding Officer 8 Field Engineer Regiment, writes...

On reading this article, I was somewhat concerned and puzzled about the use of the term "implicit tasks." In Step 3, Mission Analysis, the author describes implicit tasks as "those tasks that the commander will identify as crucial to the success of the mission. A task is said to be implicit when it requires special attention in time and space because it is so vital to the success of the mission."

I was puzzled by the use of the word implicit as well as the definition. Consulting with Lieutenant-Colonel Casarsa, a member of the Directing Staff at the Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College, he confirmed with the author that this was a translation

error. The correct term is "implied tasks" vice implicit. "Implicit tasks" do not exist. With respect to definitions, implied tasks are "other activities that must be carried out in order to achieve the mission, including the requirement to support the superior commander's main effort" (pg. 6A-7 of B-GL-300-003 *Command* refers).

As it was described to me, the author's interpretation of the definition may have some merit as it pertains to time/space resources and groupings—concrete factors to get away from motherhood, SOP or activities beyond the scope of mission of the formation. It gives the students something tangible to work with.

In my side discussion with the DS, we both agreed that an implied task cannot be vital to the superior commander, otherwise it would be assigned. An implied task is important to the tactical commander to meet the higher commander's intent. However, the subordinate commander cannot ignore all, or many, of the implied tasks without being in peril of failing in

his overall mission. Reviewing the French text, it would appear that the emphasis is different.

As I have always understood an implied task, it is normally an enabling task that allows the accomplishment of the assigned mission. In some cases it may be a task that is identified by the subordinate commander based on his knowledge of the situation. An implied task must contribute to the mission or follow the commander's

intent. As an example, "dominate road junction XYZ" may be an implied task to a mission of an area defence. This deduction leads to specific requirements for resources and a specific task. "Digging in" as an implied task to a defensive operation may certainly be an implied task, but this is a motherhood statement that does not contribute to the assignment of resources and tasks to subordinates. Perhaps, in simplest terms, an implied task drawn from

a superior commander's orders and intent should translate into a specific task to a subordinate.

I would suggest that this correction be highlighted in the next edition as well as clarification on the whether or not an implied task is vital.



Commentary on "Canada and UN Peacekeeping—Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970," a book review prepared by Mark Gaillard, *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 2002-2003, pp. 79-81.

The author of the book, Sean M. Maloney, PhD, writes...

It is common for those that engage in "spin," that is, the manipulation of perceptions for political purposes, to purposefully ignore inconvenient facts and selectively use information to make a case. We expect diplomats to do that on behalf of our country against foreigners we want manipulated to further Canadian interests. We should not expect such tools to be employed against citizens and historians who are trying to ascertain the actual fabric of Canadian history and political culture so they can make informed decisions. In his attempt at reviewing *Canada and UN Peacekeeping—Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970*, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade representative Mark Gaillard chooses to focus on peripheral issues rather than examining the main thesis of the book. Since he has focused on the periphery instead of highlighting other important issues that affect Canadian policy makers and soldiers, so be it. I will meet him on that ground.

It is indisputable that there is a commonly held perception in Canada that a Canadian, Lester B. "Mike" Pearson, invented UN peacekeeping. This perception has been successfully exported and continues to live on in the media and popular culture. Canadians do not distinguish between inventing UN peacekeeping and inventing UNEF.

Invent: "create by thought; devise; originate."

Mike Pearson did not invent UN peacekeeping.

The use of military forces for peacekeeping missions was conceptualized in Canada by a number of anonymous staff officers working on the Joint Planning Committee in 1948 for then-Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Charles Foulkes, eight years before the events of the 1956 Suez Crisis.

Canadian Brigadier H. H. Angle and his subordinates were practising UN peacekeeping in the Kashmir starting in 1949, seven years before the events of the 1956 Suez Crisis. They had to create a force and devise how it would operate. The origins of the UN operation in Kashmir lay in discussions between (Canadian) General A.G.L. McNaughton and Zaffrullah Khan of Pakistan.

Canadian Lieutenant General E.L.M. "Tommy" Burns, and his subordinates were practising UN peacekeeping in the Middle East starting in 1954, nearly two years before the events of the 1956 Suez Crisis. The origins of the UN operation in the Middle East lay in part with the 1948 conceptualizations of Count Folke Bernadotte, who wanted an armed UN peacekeeping force for Jerusalem.

Mike Pearson did not invent UNEF.

Lieutenant-General Burns believed that the existing multinational UN force in the Middle East was inadequate, required more firepower, wanted the ability of such a force to intervene and suggested so in diplomatic discussions in November 1955, regardless of who was listening in Ottawa. Burns had previously discussed this with UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld and his assistant Andrew Cordier prior to his meeting with the British Foreign Secretary. His conception of such a force was not radically different from what was deployed in 1956, that is, UN troops intervened between the armed forces of the parties. Hammarskjöld and Cordier

were instrumental in introducing a UN peace force idea into UN forums at various times during the 1956 Suez Crisis, as Mr. Gaillard admits in his review. They were, therefore, already aware of such conceptualizations long before Pearson brought “his” idea to them in November 1956.

Invent: “create by thought, devise, originate.”

The 1 November 1956 Cabinet meeting data expansively cited by Mr. Gaillard (which forms the bulk of his “review”) does not contradict, as he snidely asserts, the events of November 1955 that I describe in chapter 3. Pearson suggested that an international peace force be formed for the Middle East in 1956, and Burns suggested that one be formed back in 1955. Which came first?

Invent: “create by thought, devise, originate.”

I would further suggest that it is one thing to conduct diplomacy in the comfortable environs of New York (cajole, impress, manoeuvre, manipulate, bargain, i.e., talk) and it is quite another to plan for, assemble, physically deploy and then command a multinational force, particularly in violent and dangerous environments like the Kashmir and the Middle East. Invent versus implement: which should receive more recognition? You decide. Without Burns’ imagination, skillful diplomacy and persuasion, there might have been a UNEF, but it would not have succeeded in its mission. Burns had built up personal relationships with the belligerent leaders involved in the Middle

East crisis over several years, relationships that the very busy globally-occupied Secretary of State for External Affairs Pearson could only have dreamed of having, since he only encountered those leaders on a sporadic basis.

As I pointed out in the conclusion to the book:

Finally, we must seriously reassess the relative importance of Lester B. Pearson in the development of Canadian UN peacekeeping. It is clear that Canada acted as part of a team with her allies in many of the crises handled by the United Nations during the subsequent diplomatic manoeuvrings. It is equally clear that Paul Martin played as positive a role in averting war over Cyprus as Pearson had in the Suez Crisis of 1956. It is absolutely critical that senior Canadian military personnel receive equal recognition, particularly Generals E.L.M. Burns and Foulkes, as well as many staff officers who assisted them in conceptualizing and implementing Canadian peacekeeping operations.

I stand by this conclusion and the facts bear me out. “Relative importance.” Insufficient recognition has been given to Foulkes, Burns, Angle, McNaughton and their staffs. Show me a Canadian who even knows who these men were and what their relationship to UN peacekeeping was. Their contributions are not taught in any high school or university that I know of. Nobody makes movie or TV documentaries about them or their exploits, and there are no

biographies, statues, stamps, holidays or any other cultural recognition. These men died in obscurity, while another has been transformed into a national icon by the machinations of those who choose to misunderstand his motives. Those who are members of the successor organization to the Department of External Affairs should stop being overly protective of “their” man and should stop arrogating to themselves the credit for the events of those dark days of the 1950s, events which happened long before they were born. More magnanimity is called for from such people, particularly with regards to Canada’s military leaders, their soldiers, and their accomplishments in the realm of peacekeeping.

Readers of the Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin are invited to share their opinions...

