

# FROM OTTAWA TO SARAJEVO



FROM OTTAWA TO SARAJEVO  
CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN THE BALKANS

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Dedication

To my parents,

Msgt (ret) Norman E. Hewitt and Mrs Ruth Kane Hewitt

*The way of arms and arts as the way of the warrior  
is a constant precept that needs no detailing.  
Keep arts at your left side, arms by your right,  
the two must complement each other,  
without one the other can not be.*

Hojo Code



## *The Martello Papers*

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This is the eighteenth in a series of security studies published over the past several years by the Queen's University Centre for International Relations (QCIR), under the general title of the *Martello Papers*. "From Ottawa to Sarajevo" is a detailed, empirical examination of Canadian participation in UN peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995, written by a US Air Force officer, Major Dawn Hewitt, who served as Visiting Defence Fellow at the Centre during the 1996-97 academic year.

Peacekeeping, by all accounts, has become increasingly complex since the ending of the Cold War, and as Major Hewitt's monograph reveals, nowhere have those complexities and frustrations been more apparent than in the former Yugoslavia. From the outset, Canada played a central role in UN attempts to impose some semblance of order in that war-torn land, whether by providing interposition forces in Croatia, humanitarian-relief expeditions in Bosnia, or even (as in the case of Macedonia) expert reconnaissance teams assisting the initial stages of deployment.

Major Hewitt's detailed account is enriched by numerous interviews with Canadian personnel who took part in Yugoslavian operations. At a time when, in the aftermath of the Somalia affair, Canadians might be tempted to dwell only upon the negative aspects of peacekeeping, Major Hewitt reminds her readers that the country's involvement in Yugoslavia did demonstrate how a professional military operating under nearly impossible circumstances could, nevertheless, have had a positive impact on the lives of countless innocents trapped among warring factions; in so doing the Canadian Forces left in their wake a legacy of considerable honour. Indeed, one gets the impression from reading this work that if UN peacekeeping had been run from Ottawa not New York and according to Canadian principles, norms, and operational procedures, the UNPROFOR experience would have turned out dramatically for the better.

We at the Centre are appreciative of the US Air Force for having enabled Major Hewitt to spend her research year with us, and we are especially grateful to the





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## *Acknowledgements*

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## *Glossary*

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|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ABiH   | Bosnian Government Army                                  |
| APC    | Armoured Personnel Carrier                               |
| ARGBAT | Argentine Battalion                                      |
| BSA    | Bosnian Serb Army  |
| CANBAT | Canadian Battalion                                       |
| CAS    | Close Air Support  |
| ECMM   | European Community Monitor Mission                       |
| FREBAT | French Battalion   |
| FRY    | Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)   |
| HDZ    | Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica/Croatian Democratic Party |
| HV     | Croatian Army  |
| HVO    | Croatian Defence Council (Bosnia)                        |
| ICFY   | International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia        |
| ICRC   | International Committee of the Red Cross                 |
| JNA    | Yugoslav National Army                                   |
| JORBAT | Jordanian Battalion                                      |
| NEPBAT | Nepalese Battalion                                       |
| OP     | Observation Post   |
| PPCLI  | Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry              |
| RCR    | Royal Canadian Regiment                                  |
| R22eR  | Royal 22nd Regiment (the Van Doos)                       |
| RSK    | Krajina Serb Army  |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| SDA      | Party of Democratic Action (Muslim-based party)       |
| SDS      | Serbian Democratic Party                              |
| SPS      | Socialist Party of Serbia                             |
| SOP      | Standard Operating Procedure                          |
| TO       | Territorial Defence Force                             |
| TOW      | Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided missile |
| UNCIVPOL | UN Civilian Police                                    |
| UNHCR    | United Nations High Commission for Refugees           |
| UNMO     | United Nations Military Observers (unarmed)           |
| UNSC     | United Nations Security Council                       |
| ZNG      | Croat National Guard                                  |

## *Introduction*

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In May 1993, a year into the Bosnian war, the United Nations (UN) approved a project to reinforce the road between the Bosnian Muslim village of Tarcin and the Bosnian Croat village of Kresevo. The road had been used to transport supplies that winter and the UN had found it wanting. A Bosnian Serb civil engineer, who had graduated from the University of Sarajevo, was appointed overseer for the operation. He was given a group of Bosnian Muslim workers to perform the road work. A company of Canadians from CANBAT 2 stationed at Kiseljak were tasked to perform escort duty for the six weeks it would take to upgrade the road.

Early in the morning the Canadian peacekeepers would send out three armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and a jeep before the workers arrived. One APC was stationed at the Bosnian Croat Army (HVO) checkpoint on top of a mountain at one end of the road. The second APC would be at the road with the workers. The third APC was stationed near the Muslim confrontation line before Tarcin. An officer in the jeep would drive between the APCs and locations, monitoring the situation.

One morning in late June as the road neared completion, the Canadians arrived but the workers did not. Suddenly a company of the Bosnian government army (ABiH) charged down the newly built road toward Kresevo. The Canadians quickly went to an all-round defence in their APCs and watched as the ABiH swept past their positions. The ABiH ignored the Canadians, but they killed everyone at the HVO checkpoint and proceeded to raze the village of Kresevo.

Platoon commander Captain Yvan Pichette arrived after the battle to secure his men. Pichette found the ABiH commander surveying the destruction, resting his tennis shoe upon the body of one of the HVO soldiers. Pichette calmly informed the commander, "I'm here to collect my troops." The ABiH commander nodded and allowed them to depart.<sup>1</sup>

The world tends to see the UN missions in the former Yugoslavia as either a great humanitarian salvation (as evidenced by the Sarajevo Airbridge Operation

*Danyluk, R22eR and an HVO soldier on the Tarcin-Kresovo road.  
Photo by Capt Peter Danyluk*



which delivered food aid to beleaguered Bosnians) or military incompetence (as witnessed by the chaining of UN Military Observers [UNMOs] to fences and bridges). As real life is not black and white there is truth in both statements.

When war broke out in Croatia, the world turned to the European Community

There were three choices facing the UN upon the collapse of the Yugoslav state. They could have sealed the borders and prevented the conflict from spreading to the other Balkan nations. They could have intervened with significant military force, in effect becoming an army of occupation, and forced a solution. Or they could have maintained just enough involvement to avert the worst effects of war on the civilian population.

The first choice was nearly impossible because of the international outcry over ethnic cleansing and war crimes that had not been witnessed by Western Europe since World War II. The international community demanded action. The second choice, massive military involvement, was shied away from by the West, in large measure because of the cost involved. Estimates suggested anywhere from 100,000 to 500,000 troops would need to deploy.<sup>6</sup> Numerous commentators raised the spectre of World War II. It was pointed out the Wehrmacht had been tied down by a ghastly guerilla war for five years.<sup>7</sup> For its part, the US did not want another Vietnam. The UN therefore chose the third alternative, deciding to allow the war to continue while dampening its worst effects.

There is no doubt the UN relieved the worst of the suffering of the civilian population. In 1992 Bosnia suffered 130,000 war dead, mostly civilians. In 1993 there were 30,000 war dead. In 1994 there were 13,000 dead, most of those soldiers.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, and it is a brutal thought, the UN made the war bearable, and probably helped to prolong the conflict. Considering the UN's choice for involvement, could its deployment have been better handled?

Many commanders argued that the UN could not use military force as it would compromise the troops' neutrality and set them up as targets. Neither should the UN act as an army of occupation. By that choice, UN peacekeepers were subject to hostage-taking, sniper fire, and artillery barrages. General Sir Michael Rose stated that this is part of peacekeeping. If so, it seems to be a *new* aspect of peacekeeping considering the scale on which it happened. And the conflict in Bosnia, in which there was no peace treaty to enforce, is more indicative of peacemaking. The evidence suggests the peacekeepers who took a strong military stance avoided many of those problems. The initial UN stance did not bring Bosnia closer to peace. In the end NATO became involved and exerted decisive military force. Indeed the impending airstrikes of August 1995 did mean the UN lost some of its neutrality because by that point the UN was only deployed on federation territory. No peacekeeper remained on ground held by the Bosnian Serbs. But the UN had never been fully neutral in the conflict anyway. It frequently refused to punish the Bosnian Muslims for violations it would not tolerate from the Bosnian Serbs. This was understandable. If you are involved in a war, you cannot afford to have all sides against you, unless you have the overwhelming military advantage. The UN did not.

The Canadians deployed a battalion to Croatia and another to Bosnia. They provided the UN with engineering and logistic support and a number of Canadians served at the multinational UN headquarters in Zagreb and Sarajevo. Of the

38 nations deployed, the Canadians were arguably the most experienced at peace-keeping. As they did not sport the heavy firepower or variety of high-tech equipment of the British or French, their tours were more indicative of the broader UN contingent experience. And their frustrations, whether aimed at the UN bureaucracy for a failure to deliver supplies or a warring faction for using a road constructed to deliver humanitarian supplies to wage war, constitute a perfect case study of UN operations. The Canadian experience can illuminate the successes and failures of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as a whole in the former Yugoslavia.

## Notes

1. Military interview.
2. Walter Gary Sharp, Sr., *UN Peace Operations* (New York: American Heritage Custom Publishing Group, 1995), pp. 1-2.
3. It was President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia who had agreed for the Krajina Serbs to the UN deployment. The Krajina Serb leader Milan Babic opposed the UN deployment in January 1992 but caved in after pressure from Belgrade.
4. Military interview.
5. Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 114.
6. Gwynne Dyer, "Intervene in Bosnia before price goes higher," *Toronto Star*, 12 August 1992, p. A17; Major General Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 508.
7. Military historian Gwynne Dyer refers to this as the Yugoslav myth. He points out that the Germans only took over from the Italians in Serbia in 1943, and they never lost control of the cities or roads in Yugoslavia. The 12 divisions in Yugoslavia were among the poorest quality of the 300 divisions deployed by the Germans. The guerrilla war did not evict the Germans, the Soviet Army did. Gwynne Dyer, "Another Vietnam?" *Gazette* (Montreal), 14 August 1992, p. B3.



# *1. The Origins of the Conflict*

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“It’s ethnic warfare. You can’t stop it.” “They’ve been killing each other for thousands and thousands of years and will continue to kill each other for the next one thousand.” “These people hate each other on a level that’s almost genetic.”<sup>1</sup> Many in North America perceive the conflict in Bosnia as one caused by ancient ethnic hatreds. As such, the conflict of the 1990s is simply a continuation of a war that has been ongoing for the past thousand years.

The Yugoslav civil war was neither inevitable nor a continuation of a previous conflict. Obviously, war has occurred in the former Yugoslavia during the past millenium, as it has in France, Germany, or the Netherlands. The component parts of Yugoslavia have also known long periods of peace, even productivity. Many members of the warring ethnic groups only claimed their “ethnicity” (nationality is a better term and the one used by Yugoslavia) in the nineteenth or even the twentieth century. The truth is, the former Yugoslavia has hosted such a variety of ethnic groups and nations that individuals of the state would have an impossible time determining what percentage of their genetic make-up belonged to the Illyrians, Romans, Vlachs, Slovenes, Italians, Magyars, Albanians, Germans, Turks, Bulgars, Macedonians, Croats, or Serbs. In a land where one has been free to select ethnicity based on a choice of religion, Yugoslav has been as valid an ethnic group as Croat, Serb, or Muslim.

Nor should it be forgotten that the Yugoslavs chose to join together, as indeed unlike the rest of Eastern Europe, they chose a communist state. It was Yugoslavia’s misfortune that their communism began to collapse long before the wall came down in Berlin and there was widespread international recognition that the Marxist-Leninist system was doomed to failure. The inability to adapt to the collapse of Yugoslav communism and move toward a democratic state was a major reason for the conflict,

as was the effort of ruthless *apparatchiks* to maintain power through the use of nationalism when it was apparent the communist system was in collapse. Such men as Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic irresponsibly disregarded the consequences of rampant nationalism. None of this means history is irrelevant to understanding the Yugoslav conflict. It was the participants' abilities to draw upon and corrupt history that led to the numerous atrocities that plagued the conflict and drew some 38 nations into the maelstrom.

If Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the founder of communist Yugoslavia, had lived until 1989, it is possible that Yugoslavia would have made the peaceful transition through democratic reform to a free-market economy as the states of Eastern Europe have done in the past several years. Instead, Yugoslavs were offered the opportunity for change in 1980 before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Rather than making a colossal leap to a new ideology, Yugoslavia's leaders chose to turn to nationalism to maintain their power in a state on the verge of economic collapse.

The refusal to spurn communism was in part due to history. Neither the Ottoman Empire nor the Austro-Hungarian Empire, much less communist Yugoslavia, had left a flexible, pluralistic political system the Yugoslavs could build upon.<sup>2</sup> More importantly, communism had been created within Yugoslavia, not imposed from the outside. "The Titoist brand of socialism, especially after the split with the Soviet Union, was not felt to be alien but rather an authentic, distinguishing feature of Yugoslav society."<sup>3</sup>

Attempts at internal economic reform from 1983-86 ended in failure. As the situation worsened, the bureaucrats ignored all the careful checks and balances Tito had established and pushed Yugoslavia toward disintegration. Titoist Yugoslavia consisted of six strong autonomous republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia). Serbia was kept relatively weak vis-à-vis the federation (with two autonomous provinces within its borders, Vojvodina and Kosovo). However, although Serbia was weak, there was strong Serb participation inside the republics in respect of political leadership and the military.<sup>4</sup> In post-Titoist Yugoslavia, the Serbians (backed by Montenegro) pushed for a further centralized Yugoslavia (in which they would have greater control), the Slovenes wanted to increase individual autonomy, and the Croats kept silent — but this backed the Slovenes, as they refused to weigh in with the Serbs; meanwhile, Bosnia and Macedonia tried to maintain the status quo.<sup>5</sup>

The *intelligentsia* were now allowed to print and promote nationalist ideologies. They were greatly responsible in the 1980s and particularly the early 1990s for promoting an "us versus them" attitude, increasing the hate level in the populace. Religious institutions such as the Serbian Orthodox church embraced nationalism. The media, too, were more than happy to serve as the organs of the nationalists.<sup>6</sup> The media were increasingly strident in the early 1990s, escalating tensions by reporting every nationalist/ethnic incident and encouraging a violent response. A reporter from *Vreme* told US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren

Zimmermann, “You Americans would become nationalists and racists too if your media were totally in the hands of the Ku Klux Klan.”<sup>7</sup>

## **Elections and Growing Nationalism**

Although most of the Yugoslav republics had large minorities, only Serbia had

Ante Markovic became the federal prime minister of Yugoslavia in March 1989.



Tudjman judged all Croatian Serbs by the urban Croatian Serbs he knew in Zagreb. He failed to understand rural Krajina Serb society. The Krajina is a mountainous belt that runs along the western and northwestern border of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Ottomans encouraged the nomadic, martial Vlachs (who were Eastern Orthodox in faith) to move to the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier. They were given financial incentives such as a lowering of the tax on sheep, and the leaders were granted military holdings (*timars*). Since they were not granted a military salary, the Vlachs were allowed to take their plunder for reimbursement. These groups evolved into the Bosnian Serb groups in northern Bosnia.

Other Vlachs and Serbs who fled north from the Ottomans in the fifteenth century were organized by the Habsburgs for military defence against the Ottomans. Ferdinand I of Austria established a formal military system for the Vlachs and Serbs in 1527. This included formal land holdings with military duties, and the right to practice Orthodox Christianity. There was a settlement by other ethnic groups in the zone, including Serb merchants. The merging of the population, along with the adoption of Serbo-Croatian and the concept of nationalism in the nineteenth century caused those in the Krajina eventually to declare themselves Serbs.<sup>12</sup> Krajina Serb society continued its martial traditions into the twentieth century. Krajina culture attached a great importance to weapons. School children were taught to use shotguns and handguns. A person's standing in the community could be enhanced by an ability to wield a weapon.<sup>13</sup>

Upon the election of the HDZ and Franjo Tudjman, Krajina Serbs feared the reestablishment of the Ustasha state. They associated Croatian nationalism with fascism. Nor did Tudjman do anything to allay their fears. Red-chequered flags flew everywhere after the election. Although to the Croats the red-chequered flag is a symbol of the medieval Croatian state, to the rest of Yugoslavia it is associated with the fascist state of World War II. Tudjman made it clear that the Yugoslav majority Serbs were now minority Serbs in a Croatian state. It was mandated that literary Croatian be used in all Croatian administration and the Cyrillic script<sup>14</sup> was banned. Although less than 5 percent of Croatian Serbs could use Cyrillic, the act of banning the script promoted Serb fears and encouraged Serbian nationalism. Later, Tudjman would continue the trend, replacing bi-script road signs with Latin-script-only signs.

A greater percentage of Serbs worked in the government than would be warranted by their percentage in the population. This was partly due to more Serbs being members of the communist party. Tudjman made nationality a criterion for government service. Large numbers of Croatian Serbs were laid off from the state administration and the police force. This surge in Serb unemployment provided ammunition to the Serbian nationalists.

Dr Jovan Raskovic, a psychiatrist at Sibenik's hospital and leader of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) met with President Tudjman in May (before the Croatian constitution was drafted) to discuss Croatian Serb autonomy. Raskovic was vague about autonomy and did not see it as having a specific territorial dimension but rather a guarantee of certain rights to the Serbs and their recognition

as part of Croatia. The two failed to reach an agreement and Tudjman went ahead and approved a constitution defining Croatia as a nation of Croats. This opened the way for more radical control of the SDS by Milan Babić, a Knin dentist and former member of the Stalinist, Croatian communist party. That summer, Babić met with Belgrade officials and undoubtedly received Milošević's backing to establish an autonomous state. Babić proceeded to build a well-armed militia supplied by the JNA and members of the Yugoslav interior ministry. The SDS organized a Krajina Serb referendum in August and September 1990 calling for political autonomy for the Krajina. The Croatian government declared the referendum illegal and attempted to use the police to stop it.<sup>15</sup> The action failed utterly against the heavily armed Krajina Serbs who under Babić's urging ended up barricading the Krajina. Unlike Rasković, the wily Babić had clear borders in mind and introduced the idea of the Krajina seceding from Croatia.<sup>16</sup>

the three major parties and formed a government of national unity.<sup>18</sup> The government surprisingly held on until fall 1991, but certain elements were already working to undermine it. Radovan Karadzic was receiving arms shipments from Serbia through 1990. President Slobodan Milosevic knew of and supported these deliveries. Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) mp Mihalj Kertes in Belgrade organized arms deliveries to Bosanska Krajina (northwest), eastern Herzegovina (southwest), and Romanija (the mountainous area east of Sarajevo).

By autumn 1990, the republics had derailed Markovic's reforms. The privatization program was halted. Government expenditures rose as did inflation. Come January, Slovenia and Croatia had suspended all federal laws and were pushing full-force toward independence — at the most, willing to maintain a loose confederal arrangement with Yugoslavia. Slovenia seemed unconcerned that it was the only state with a somewhat homogenous population; the other states were sure to face violent civil conflict if they tried to leave the union. Croatia blithely ignored its large Serb population's demands or concerns. And Bosnia and Macedonia desperately pleaded for reconciliation.

The unrestrained nationalist agitation finally led to violence in March 1991. While the Krajina Serbs had barricaded themselves against Croatian authority, the Serb populations in western and eastern Slavonia remained nominally under Croatian control. Milan Babic and his military advisor Milan Martic (a former Knin police inspector) wished to bring the other Serb areas under the authority of the "Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina." In February, Serbs loyal to Babic and Martic seized control of the police station and municipality building in Pakrac, western Slavonia. On 2 March, the Croatian ministry of the interior sent a team in, to regain control of a now damaged Pakrac. It arrested 180 Serbs, while others fled to the nearby hills. The Croat interior police secured Pakrac by that afternoon. Later that evening the JNA intervened and separated the forces. Pakrac was returned to Croatian control.

Each one of these sorts of incidents was seized upon by the nationalist media and blown into a full conflagration. In Belgrade reports circulated that 20,000 Croatian Serb refugees were pouring into Serbia. The front page of the mass-circulation *Vecernje Novosti* cried that an orthodox priest and 11 others had been killed, yet on page two it said the priest was wounded, and on page three the same priest gave a statement of the events. Jovan Raskovic denounced Croatia before a Krajina Serb rally, proclaiming it had "declared war on the Serb nation."<sup>19</sup>

Babic and Martic would make another try on 30 March, when they tried to seize control of Plitvice National Park, a famous tourist mecca.<sup>20</sup> The JNA again stepped in to restore order, but this time two people died and another 20 were injured.

Nor was Belgrade immune from disturbance. Opposition forces held a demonstration demanding greater media access. President Bora Jovic of the federation ordered in the JNA tanks. One of the Serbian opposition leaders in parliament was arrested and two died in the confrontation. This in effect marked the point

where the JNA deserted Prime Minister Ante Markovic and his federalism and joined their fate to that of Slobodan Milosevic and Greater Serbia. The JNA generals had maintained a close relationship with Markovic who paid their wages. Now they reached a tentative accommodation with Milosevic. And Milosevic did indeed seem to be working toward a Greater Serbia as early as March 1991. Both Tudjman and Milosevic had made the American ambassador aware of their desire to incorporate large chunks of Bosnia into their respective republics. In March the two met secretly in Karadordevo, Vojvodina, and agreed to a division of Bosnia should the republics become independent. Not long after, Milosevic publicly stated individual nationalities could leave Yugoslavia, but they could not drag unwilling Serbs with them. Serbia would fight to preserve their rights.<sup>21</sup>

preempted Slovenia's declaration of independence, by voting in favour in the late afternoon 25 June 1991. The Slovenes followed suit later that evening.

## **The Ten-Day War**

Slovenia moved to take control of all border posts on 26 June 1991. It replaced the "Welcome to Yugoslavia" signs with "Welcome to Slovenia." By seizing the posts on the Italian and Austrian borders, the Slovenes were in effect blocking the free transport of goods from Yugoslavia to the West. Some 75 percent of the Yugoslav budget was derived from customs revenues. The Slovenes obviously had things planned out and moved quickly. The federal Yugoslav government passed a resolution declaring Croatia's and Slovenia's acts illegal and ordered the JNA to be deployed. Two thousand troops were to escort 400 policemen and 270 customs officials to the border crossings. The JNA proceeded to underestimate seriously the capabilities and determination of the Slovene territorial defence. The JNA had 20,000 troops on Slovene territory but only deployed 2,000. And most of those 2,000 actually deployed from Croatian soil (Varazdin, Zagreb, Karlovac). The JNA thought their mere presence would cause the Slovenes to recant. This miscalculation cost them. While the TO resisted the JNA, Slovenia withdrew its representatives from the presidency and executive council of Yugoslavia.

After a JNA helicopter was shot down, the Yugoslav air force was deployed to knock out radio and TV transmitters. The TO seized keys and passports from foreign truck drivers. They then used the trucks as barricades on the roads against the JNA. The air force strafed the trucks and several of the foreign drivers died. Yet, it was the Slovenes who made the most use of the media. They provided film footage showing JNA tanks shredding makeshift barriers. No one remarked on the TO-seized foreign vehicles.<sup>23</sup>

Within ten days it was over. The European Community negotiated a ceasefire, the Brioni agreement. All JNA would return to barracks. Croatia and Slovenia were to suspend their declarations of independence. Monitors from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would see to the disengagement of JNA and TO forces and oversee the Brioni agreement. The Slovenes did little to comply with the agreement and three months later were acting as an independent nation. Milosevic was prepared to allow Slovenia to depart the federation; it was Croatia he insisted stay (or at least the Serb-dominated portions). This was a critical mistake, as Admiral Branko Mamula pointed out: allowing Slovenia to go, while continuing the fight in Croatia, deprived the con-

The Croatian government had not tried to seize the border crossings although the *Sabor* started nonstop work creating a new Croatian government and legal structure.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, there was a surge in the fighting in three areas of Croatia during the Ten-Day War: Gospic, Banija (an area south of Zagreb which includes Sisak and Glina), and eastern Slavonia. The Marticevci<sup>25</sup> increased their area of control during July, for example, bringing in the Croatian Serbs of Glina who had remained loyal to the Croatian government until the declaration of independence.

Franjo Tudjman paid an informal visit to Bonn on 18 July where he met with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.<sup>26</sup> Germany and Austria wholeheartedly supported Slovene and Croatian independence even while Britain and the United States opposed Germany's efforts to grant recognition. Germany's support seemingly confirmed the Croatian Serbs' worst fears, Tudjman had reestablished the Ustasha government of World War II. Tudjman and fascism were inextricably intertwined in their minds. Germany itself was widely referred to as "the Fourth Reich,"<sup>27</sup> and German citizens were reviled. As usual, Tudjman did not allay Croatian Serb fears. In fact, he apparently came away encouraged from his visit (one of several).

Five days after Tudjman's return, the federal representatives met in Ohrid, Macedonia, to work out a solution and avoid an escalation of violence in Croatia. Tudjman departed the meeting abruptly, ending the last chance for an internal solution. Three days later there was a violent confrontation between the Croat National Guard (ZNG) and the JNA near Vukovar, eastern Slavonia. Vukovar was Croat, but the Vukovar *opstina*<sup>28</sup> had a slight Serb majority. Zagreb had dissolved the local council and appointed a governor. The Croatian Serbs rejected this arrangement. The ZNG decided to enforce the directive, and for the first time, the JNA clearly sided with the Croatian Serbs. Tudjman demanded the JNA return to barracks. In early August he announced a general mobilization and three weeks later (27 August) it was carried out. Coincident with this, the JNA Banja Luka Corps launched an attack from Bosnia against Croatian Posavina. Two days later the JNA laid siege to Vukovar. The war in Croatia ignited. And the world was introduced to a new term, "ethnic cleansing."

The first village subjected to ethnic cleansing was in the Krajina. The village of Kijevo was a Croat village surrounded by Serb territory. The citizens had barricaded themselves in since 1 March. Milan Martić issued a warning that they should evacuate or face the consequences. The tactic Martić followed was used by the paramilitaries in the months to come. On 26 August, the JNA pounded Kijevo for 12 hours with artillery. The next day, the Marticevci entered the village and burned the homes while the Croatians fled.<sup>29</sup> An artillery bombardment followed by infantry entering the village was subsequently refined with the killing and mutilation of key citizens by the paramilitary and gang rape of selected women. The purpose was to cause the citizens to flee, removing a potentially hostile population.

While both the Krajina and western Slavonia suffered fighting, by far the worst actions occurred in eastern Slavonia. Serb and Croat paramilitaries operated freely in the more ethnically mixed eastern Slavonia and they bear the responsibility for the most gruesome atrocities. These paramilitaries were ultranationalist and many were led by international criminals. Two examples are Zeljko Raznjatovic and Branimir Glavis. Raznjatovic was known as Arkan and led the Tigers in slaugh-

a solution. But with Germany pushing, the EC invited all the republics to apply for recognition subject to conditions laid out by Brussels.

Although there had been talk of deploying the Western European Union (WEU), the only forces the EC deployed to Croatia were the 150 (increased to 225 in September) diplomats and soldiers of the European Community Monitor Mission. Originally deployed to oversee the implementation of the Brioni agreement, they were continued in Croatia during the various autumn ceasefires to observe the withdrawal of the JNA. As the JNA showed little inclination to withdraw at that time, the ECMM mostly observed token withdrawals and reported violations of the ceasefires.<sup>31</sup>

While the UN did not want to interfere or undercut the EC's diplomatic efforts, the events of Vukovar were propelling it to action. In September President Stipe Mesic of the Yugoslav federal presidency sent a letter to the UN requesting peace-keeping forces. Other members of the presidency were not aware of the letter and



HV encouraged the destruction of the historic city by setting up small artillery positions on the walls of the old town which fired at the JNA. Croatia did its best to exploit international opinion and it had an effect. Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General John Galvin, prepared contingency plans to use NATO military force to stop the bombardment. Western leaders in the end declined to involve NATO, a move Ambassador Zimmermann had approved but later regretted. He now feels a strong stand at that time by NATO could have prevented later bloodshed in Bosnia.<sup>34</sup>

The residents of Dubrovnik refused to surrender and by November the battle lines had become somewhat static with low-level activity. Thus the artillery bombardment in December embarrassed General Kadijevic who had just signed the Vance plan — which had included a ceasefire. Kadijevic called for an investigation as to who had authorized the attack on Dubrovnik.

In mid-December 1991, Germany announced it would unconditionally recognize Slovenia and Croatia on 15 January 1992. President Alija Izetbegovic panicked. His republic was the most ethnically mixed. If Croatia was internationally recognized before a peaceful solution was found to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, there would be civil war in Bosnia. At the time President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia, fearing that the same conflict would touch his ethnically mixed republic,<sup>35</sup> also opposed recognition. Izetbegovic travelled to Bonn to try to talk Kohl and Genscher out of recognizing Croatia and Slovenia. He warned Kohl that international recognition would strip Bosnia of the constitutional protection it



the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats consolidated territory, while the Bosnian government turned to the world press to secure international military intervention for their cause.

The Bosnian Serbs opened their military campaign on 27 March 1992. Their offensive was based on securing the strategic road network.<sup>43</sup> The Bosnian Serbs took cities along routes from Serbia to Bosnia and from Croatia to Bosnia. They immediately captured Foca, Cajnice, Visegrad, Zvornik, Bijeljina, Bosanski Brod, Derventa, and Kupres. After six weeks, the Bosnian Serbs controlled 60 percent of the country (they formed 31 percent of the population).<sup>44</sup>

The Bosnian Serbs already controlled the countryside in these areas, but several cities along their routes contained significant numbers of Bosnian Muslims (or in the case of Bosanski Brod, Bosnian Croats) who supported the Bosnian government. The JNA would set up roadblocks and bombard the towns. Then, as in Croatia, the paramilitaries would be sent to mop up. The objective of the paramilitaries was to scare the Bosnian Muslims and Croats into fleeing. They engaged in selective killing to inspire fear and flight. They would go after the community's elite and those men of military age. Zvornik (which was hit in the initial campaign) and Bratunac (which endured Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim sweeps) suffered some of the worst excesses of the war.<sup>45</sup>

While many believed the paramilitaries were rogue elements, evidence indicates that some Serbs were closely connected to the JNA. The leaders of the paramilitaries such as Vojislav Seselj, Jovic, and Arkan were linked to Serbian nationalist political parties and the Serbian Orthodox church. The Serbian government had passed laws in 1991 giving the paramilitaries status in the JNA with related benefits. As seen earlier, the Croat paramilitaries enjoyed similar links. How then to explain the appalling atrocities that occurred in Croatia and Bosnia? There are three strands that increased the brutality of this war: the events of World War II, the media, and communist Yugoslav army doctrine.

The Yugoslavs not only dealt with a German occupation during World War II, but they had two civil wars on their territory, one that pitted Croat extremists against Croatian Serbs and Bosnian Serbs; and a second between the Chetniks (royalists led by Draza Mihailovic)<sup>46</sup> and the communist Partisans (led by Tito). Probably one million died in Yugoslavia during the war — most killed by fellow Yugoslavs, not Germans. The first conflict was roughly an ethnic one, the second was ideological and involved all the ethnic groups on both sides. But 50 years later, with strong nationalism, people could come up with specific examples of atrocities by the opposing factions. As an example of the integration of the sides, only in late 1941 did Bosnian Muslims join Tito in great numbers (before that they tended to favour the Ustasha government). By joining the Partisans, they endured terrible massacres from the Chetniks in the Foca-Cajnice region. At least 2,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed in August 1942, and another 9,000 in February 1943. Yet the Muslims of Zenica were part of the local Chetnik resistance, and by 1943, 8 percent of Mihailovic's soldiers were Muslim.



Europe will have to join Serbia in the battle against Islam. 'Imagine, there were infants on that list.'<sup>52</sup>

The people of Bosnia had seen film footage and heard of the atrocities in Croatia. They were prepared to believe the worst.

Finally, the doctrines inherent in the communist Yugoslav army should not be underestimated. Tito had brutally sovietized the areas he liberated in World War II, executing the bourgeoisie. He had engaged in actions that caused the death of

14. Croats, Bosnians, and Serbs all speak Serbo-Croatian. Serbo-Croatian can be written in either the Latin script (as was the tendency in western Yugoslavia) or the Cyrillic script (the tendency in eastern Yugoslavia).
15. The JNA had seized the Croat territorial defence unit's weapons after the election. Tudjman worked to build a paramilitary in the summer of 1990 but the Croats had to arm themselves from scratch. Expatriates from the US, Canada, Austria, and Germany provided money to Croatia to smuggle arms across the border of Austria and Hungary. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 152.
16. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 16-19; Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 103, 107, 110.
17. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 145-46.
18. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 222-23.
19. Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 105, 146-47.
20. Two hundred Italian tourists got caught in the clash between the Croatian and Krajina Serb forces; *ibid.*, p. 148.
21. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 149; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 156; Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," pp. 126-27.
22. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 89.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 96; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 161-62; Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," p. 123; James Gow, "One Year of War in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report 2* (4 June 1993): 4.
24. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 165.
25. The territorial defence force of the Krajina.
26. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Wolf-Jobst-Siedler Verlag, 1995), p. 932. Translation provided by Reinhard Golks.
27. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 112.
28. An *opstina* is similar to a county.
29. Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 188-90.
30. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 106, 116; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 194.
31. Sean M. Maloney, "Operation BOLSTER: Canada and the European Community Monitor Mission in the Balkans 1991-1994" (unpublished), pp. 4-7.
32. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London. Background Brief, *The Former Yugoslavia: Chronology January 1990 - 31 October 1996*, November 1996, p. 1; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 205-6.
33. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 208; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 135; Major General Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), pp. 151, 174; Headquarters United Nations Peace Forces, *Force Commander's End of Mission Report*, former Yugoslavia, January 1996, p. 1.
34. Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," p. 126; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 136; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 201-04; Gow, "One Year in Bosnia," p. 7.

35. According to the 1994 census, Macedonia is 66.5 percent ethnic Macedonian, 22.9 percent ethnic Albanian, 4 percent Turkic, 2.3 percent Roma (Gypsies), and 2 percent Serb (the census also recorded Bosniacs, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and Croatians). Macedonian Census Report issued by Macedonian Statistical Office 28 December 1994.
36. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 224-25.
37. Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (London: Penguin, 1996), pp. 71-72; Malcolm, *Bosnia*





## *2. Send in the Blue Helmets*

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UN envoy Cyrus Vance witnessed the signing of a fifteenth ceasefire between military representatives from Croatia and the Yugoslav army (JNA). The 3 January 1992 ceasefire was not a total success. Firing incidents continued and on 7 January the Yugoslav air force shot down a clearly marked European Community Monitor Mission (ECCM) helicopter killing the five monitors on board. Belgrade immediately suspended the air force commander, General Zvonko Jurjevic (as it happens a Croat). The EC talked of suspending its monitoring mission until the safety of its personnel was assured,<sup>1</sup> but the undeterred UN readied a 50-person advance team to be sent to Zagreb and Belgrade in preparation for the deployment of 13,140 UN peacekeepers.

The 50 unarmed observers of the United Nations Military Officers Yugoslavia

Milan Babic sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warning that UN troops could become casualties if they tried to deploy. Babic was initially backed by the JNA commander in the Krajina, General Ratko Mladic. President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia acted to re-exert control over his former minion by applying pressure to the Krajina Serb elect. He publicly denounced the former Knin dentist. This was followed by a meeting of moderate Krajina Serb representatives in Glina in mid-February who voted to remove Babic. Babic denounced the vote from Knin. Four days later, the minister of the interior, Milan Martic, ordered Krajina Serb militia units to subordinate themselves to the JNA. When the forces failed to respond, Martic was removed by Babic who had now lined up his support. Slavko Ozegovic became the new minister of the interior and a parliamentary vote confirmed Babic as president.<sup>5</sup> But Milosevic's pressure did the trick: on 22 February (one day after the UN Security Council voted to send 13,140 troops to Croatia) Babic announced he would accept UN forces in the Krajina.<sup>6</sup>

The UN selected Indian Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar as force commander for the UNPROFOR operation. The deputy commander would be French Major-General Philippe Morillon and the chief of operations Canadian Brigadier-General Lewis MacKenzie. The three met in New York in March, where they were told their headquarters would be located in Sarajevo and the UN logistics base would be in Banja Luka. The generals immediately objected to the locations. It was obvious the direction Bosnia was heading, which meant their headquarters and logistics base would be sitting in a war zone. As the UN was futilely hoping their small presence would deter Bosnia from civil conflict, the three were told Sarajevo was non-negotiable, but they would allow some leeway for the logistics base.<sup>7</sup>

It was decided there would be four UN sectors: Sector South, Sector North (the Krajina would be divided into two sectors due to its size), Sector West (carved from part of western Slavonia) and Sector East (eastern Slavonia). They would be overseen by 12 UN infantry battalions and two engineer regiments. Canada volunteered 1,200 soldiers, military observers, police, and personnel for the UN headquarters staff. The Canadian infantry battalion would come from Germany and be deployed to Sector West, under the overall command of Argentine Brigadier-General Carlos Maria Zabala. The Canadian Combat Engineer Regiment would support mine-clearing in all four sectors.<sup>8</sup>

The three generals arrived in Belgrade 8 March 1992. They visited officials in both Belgrade and Zagreb before arriving in Sarajevo on 13 March. Croatian officials blatantly admitted to MacKenzie that they would retake the UNPAs at the first opportunity regardless of the UN presence — not the most auspicious start. Logistical difficulties ensued as the commanders had to fly continually between the three capital cities as the forces arrived, a task that would become nearly impossible by April.<sup>9</sup>

## **Operation Harmony**

A warning order for deployment was received at Canada's two bases in Germany (Lahr and Baden-Söllingen) in the early hours of 22 February. LCol Michel Jones initiated a contingency plan that had been drawn up in the weeks before. His

Ninety engineers were sent to assist the Jordanians in establishing their camp. Ninety more were sent to Vukovar in Sector East patrolled by Belgian and Russian troops. The JNA were everywhere in Sector East and were hardly rushing to evacuate as agreed in the Vance plan, nor did they pass control of the sector to the UN. Aside from daily ceasefire violations, the city of Osijek (30 km northwest of Vukovar) was subject to sporadic shelling. Vukovar itself was rubble, only 30 percent of its original buildings remaining. Due to the fighting in Sarajevo, Vukovar lost its communications to UNPROFOR headquarters, although the Canadians did receive a supply convoy from Daruvar each week. Despite the tense situation, the engineers could not resist challenging the Russians to a game of field hockey. The Canadians trounced the Russians, raising their own morale, anyway.<sup>16</sup>

The infantry battalion to be named CANBAT 1 also travelled by train to Croatia. The first contingent arrived on 8 April and soldiers continued to arrive daily for the next two weeks. The danger of the situation became apparent the first day. A convoy driving to the camp unknowingly used an entrance that had not been checked by the combat engineers. The lead driver spotted something on the road, stopped and notified the commanding officer. It turned out to be three mines that would have caused considerable damage to the convoy.

to the pink zones (the UN technically did not have a mandate to operate there) to ensure some protection for the population by holding soldiers in the area accountable and to tell the United Nations of specific problem areas so they could exert pressure. In Sector West, CANBAT located the current ceasefire boundaries, noted the location of equipment on both sides and reported any military activity to the UN Military Observers (UNMOs). The UNMOs would then deal with any violations.<sup>20</sup>

When the Canadians began discussions with the Croats and Croatian Serbs they had first to listen to a history lesson that began with the Middle Ages and concluded with every wrong done to the speaker's family by the opposite faction in the past 50 years. It did not matter how many times a Canadian officer met with the same individual, the Serb or Croat wanted to repeat the history. And, of course, each negotiation session became yet another excuse to bring out the favoured Balkan alcoholic drink, *slivovitz*. One Canadian officer said he attended 25 negotiation meetings and alcohol was served at each one and frequently the negotiators were already "under the influence." A member from the Bosnian contingent (where the same problem was encountered) commented it was best to have the meetings early in the morning. Each officer had to consider whether he preferred to deal with a section commander who was drunk or one with a hangover.<sup>21</sup>

Drinking and firearms went together in Croatia. The Canadians frequently encountered drunken soldiers from both sides who would fire bursts into the air, or take aim at any passerby (particularly if they sported UN badges); one young drunk thought it amusing to threaten a couple of peacekeepers with grenades. Sergeant Sam Pengelly thought of the soldiers as "yahoos with a belly of beer — loose cannons in an already chaotic civil war."<sup>22</sup>

Many found the convoluted wording of the UN rules of engagement confusing. Typically, the NATO countries would interpret each UN ruling and send out guidance to their soldiers. Starting in September 1992, each Canadian soldier was given a laminated card with the rules of engagement.<sup>23</sup>

Canadians could fire their weapons:

1. To defend themselves, other UN personnel, or persons and areas under their protection against direct attack, acting under the order of the senior rank at the scene.
2. To resist attempts by force to prevent CCUNPROFOR from discharging their duties.
3. To resist deliberate military or paramilitary incursions into the UN protected areas or safe areas.

Aggressiveness in interpreting those rules in the field environment varied. One Battle Group commander emphasized that an individual's decisions could not be regulated. A soldier has to be well-trained in what to do, and know he will be backed up by his superiors. This commander's policy was to return fire if fired upon. He informed his contingent neither to escalate nor to bluff. Another Battle Group commander pointed out that the UN allowed soldiers to fire to protect



Izetbegovic stepped off the plane from Lisbon on 3 May and walked into the arms of the JNA. The federal soldiers took him, his daughter Sabina Berberovic, and a bodyguard to Lukavica barracks, a JNA camp east of Sarajevo airport. Kukanjac's forces were under siege in eastern Sarajevo. The nascent Bosnian





- 3) The parties undertake not to attempt to interfere in any way with the free movement of UNPROFOR-supervised air traffic into and out of Sarajevo Airport. such traffic will consist of:
  - a) Humanitarian and resupply missions.
  - b) UN and EC or related missions.
  - c) Official missions.
- 4) UNPROFOR will establish a special regime for the airport, and will supervise and control its implementation and functioning. This regime will be established at the earliest possible date after the approval of all concerned, with preparatory work beginning immediately after signature. All parties undertake to facilitate these processes, together with the handover of the airport to UNPROFOR.
- 5) Facilities, organization and security inside the airport, including perimeter security, will be supervised and controlled by UNPROFOR with its civil, military, and police personnel.
- 6) UNPROFOR will control all incoming personnel, aid, cargo, and other items to ensure that no warlike materials are imported, and that the airport's opening is not otherwise abused in any way. The parties' humanitarian organizations will each establish an office at the airport to facilitate UNPROFOR's related tasks.
- 7) All local civilian personnel required for the operation of the airport will be employed on a basis of non-discrimination, and will be supervised and controlled by UNPROFOR. To the extent possible, such personnel will comprise the current employees of the airport.
- 8) Humanitarian aid will be delivered to Sarajevo and beyond, under the supervision of the UN, in a non-discriminatory manner and on a sole basis of need. The parties undertake to facilitate such deliveries, to place no obstacle in their way, and to ensure the security of those engaged in this humanitarian work.
- 9) To ensure the safe movement of humanitarian aid and related personnel, security corridors between the airport and the city will be established and will function under the control of UNPROFOR.
- 10) This agreement shall be without prejudice to the settlement of constitutional questions now under negotiation; and to the safety and security of all inhabitants of Sarajevo and its surrounding area.

The UN had its first mandate to operate in Bosnia. It would secure the airport, a ten-kilometre safety zone around the airport, and a corridor into Sarajevo to transport food and supplies. UNPROFOR would control the airport and land corridors, UNHCR would see to the technical aspects of distributing aid. Now what was needed was a ceasefire to last long enough for the UN to open the airport. Shortly after the agreement was signed, fighting escalated around the airport as the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government sought control before the UN arrived.

MacKenzie suggested the Canadians in Sector West be used for the airport operation until the UN could send the additional 1,000 peacekeepers needed by the agreement, with himself in command of the operation. This was approved by Nambiar and MacKenzie sent a warning order to LCol Michel Jones in Sector



with representatives from the three factions. The French had reacted so quickly, the inspection team was not prepared. The aircraft was sealed until morning, then its six and half tonnes of supplies unloaded.<sup>37</sup> Four aircraft landed 30 June and unloaded. In the afternoon, four UN personnel were wounded by a sniper's bullet which entered a French APC where the bulletproof glass met the armour plating. Airport operations were suspended until the fighting ceased. The opening and closing of the airport based on the level of warring faction activity would be the

scalp and he shortly returned to duty. That same day, two other Canadians suffered minor wounds from snipers. A few days later Major Peter Devlin and seven soldiers escorted UN vehicles to Sarajevo airport in two heavy, dual-tracked vehicles. As the eight drove back to Beaver Camp, they came under fire from a couple of snipers. Two of Devlin's men located the snipers in a second-story window some 200 metres away and rapidly returned fire.<sup>40</sup>

The Bosnian snipers would hide in abandoned buildings and grassy areas and take potshots at the UN peacekeepers and relief workers. Much of the sniping was an attempt at intimidation. The snipers on all sides were a far cry from trained professionals. They would move from window to window in the high-rise buildings, and were unaware of how to use shadows. Indicative of this amateur status, by far the best ABiH sniper was a Bosnian Serb woman who had been an Olympian athlete rather than a professional soldier. By 6 July the French and Canadians deployed anti-sniper teams. They first went after snipers in Dobrinja with good results. The Canadians would wait until the sniper sighted them, then wave to let the sniper know they were on to him. If the sniper proceeded to shoot at the UN, the anti-sniper would fire one well-aimed bullet that invariably found its mark.<sup>41</sup>

Snipers were not the only danger. Corporal Dennis Reid jumped on a landmine after attaching razor wire to a fence at Beaver Camp. The mine, about the size of a hockey puck, was hidden in the ground and had escaped detection in an earlier mine sweep. The explosion blew Reid into the air and he landed on his back. His right foot had to be amputated at a Sarajevo hospital. The RCR soldier was flown to the hospital in Lahr, Germany, on 11 July where his parents joined him.<sup>42</sup>

Aside from airport security, the Canadians performed VIP escort and provided security for UNHCR convoys. LCol Michel Jones led a convoy to the Bosnian presidency on 11 July to negotiate a safe passage for a relief convoy to Dobrinja. Captain Guy Belisle was in the convoy when he spotted two wounded women about a kilometre from the presidency building. His APC was given permission to stay behind. Sergeant Mario Forest volunteered to get the women and asked Belisle to cover him. Outside the APC, Forest could see the wounded women were beside two dead men. There were three armed Bosnian government police nearby. Forest called to them to assist him to get the women to cover, but they refused. Forest

them. With tears she said, “If it wasn’t for you, I’d be dead. You saved my life.”<sup>43</sup> Belisle and Forest would later receive the Medal of Bravery for their actions, Canada’s third highest citation.

weren't happy with the route and asked us to change it. At that time all our orders



## Lessons Learned

During the month MacKenzie spent in Belgrade, he felt the UN in Sarajevo had become too passive in their responses. Hijacking of UN vehicles had become endemic by the time he returned. He actively encouraged a more robust response. Certainly, LCol Michel Jones was of the robust school as evidenced by his firm response to an obstructionist Bosnian Serb commander, which ended with the Canadians ploughing through a Bosnian Serb checkpoint on their trip from Daruvar to Sarajevo. It was in an effort to respond with the exact amount of force in which they were attacked that caused the deployment of French and Canadian anti-sniper teams in Sarajevo. Their efforts greatly decreased (although they did not eliminate) sniping, particularly regarding attacks on the UN.

The warring factions, whether in Sector West or Sarajevo, discovered an advantage in emplacing themselves near UN forces. This does not appear to have been tackled by the UN quite as vigorously as it should have been. The Canadians caught the ABiH setting up mortars on 21 July and quickly lodged a protest. However, it was not until the ABiH had attacked the BSA and the Canadians were subject to the BSA response that MacKenzie stormed into Ganic's office and demanded their removal. His threat, with the force to back it, ensured quick results. The ABiH position was dismantled within hours of the meeting.

Perhaps the most tricky situation facing peacekeepers was what to do when a belligerent demanded to search a UN vehicle. UN policy stated no searches were allowed. Yet, on a number of occasions, UN contingents had allowed their vehicles to be searched to defuse a situation or hasten action. This caused a precedent to be established with the warring factions. If you held the UN vehicles long enough, they would allow a search. Major Collins engaged in a standoff with ABiH checkpoint guards. Collins never allowed them to disarm the Canadians and maintained full control of his convoy, but he did come to feel that the best way to defuse the situation was to allow a search. Even MacKenzie agreed to this, telling Defence Minister Doko they would allow a second search with an official of his choosing. While this appeared to the Canadians to be the best option at the time, and ensured that the platoon returned safely to Beaver Camp, it solidified the precedent. It confirmed that any UN unit held under gunpoint for long enough would allow a search. This had devastating consequences in Sarajevo on 9 January 1993.

Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic of Bosnia was being transported in a French APC to a Bosnian Croat controlled area to attend a negotiating session. When the BSA learned of this, it stopped the APC and demanded access. The French refused, and the BSA brought in a tank to block the way for some eight to ten hours. The French soldiers were probably unaware that the BSA knew who was travelling with them,<sup>53</sup> and from past experience, they thought that the best way to defuse the situation was to allow a search of the APC. The BSA opened the APC and sprayed the back with machine-gun fire, killing Turajlic.<sup>54</sup>



Violations of UN standard operating procedures may not have had an immediate adverse effect on the unit. But the contingents that followed them into theatre

10. Ibid., pp. 222-23; "Canadian peacekeepers mobilize," *Toronto Star*, 23 February 1992, p. A12; "Canadians ready for peace role," *Ottawa Citizen*, 25 February 1992, p. A10; "Canuck troops shape up," *Ottawa Sun*, 25 February 1992, p. 14.
11. "UN 'Blue Helmets' move into Croatia," *Reuters*, 21 March 1992.
12. "UN peacekeepers briefed on Croatia," *Toronto Star*, 14 March 1992, p. A13; "Peacekeepers told of danger as Yugoslav mission starts," *ibid.*, 16 March 1992, p. A12; "

32. "Split emerges at UN over Aid to Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 May 1992, p. A9.
33. Text of the agreement from MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 300-2.
34. MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 307, 310-11; "UN Moves on Relief for Bosnia," *Gazette*, 9 June 1992, p. A1.
35. Discussion with a former Canadian ambassador.
36. "Shelling in capital thwarts UN peacekeeper's efforts," *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 June 1992, p. A6; "Canadian leads UN convoy into Sarajevo," *Gazette*, 12 June 1992, p. A7; "Cheers for UN turning to jeers," *Globe and Mail*, 20 June 1992, p. A5; MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 312, 319-20.
37. "Canadians to head for Sarajevo," *Globe and Mail*, 30 June 1992, p. A1; "Canadian troops start perilous trek to Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 30 June 1992, p. A1; "Relief in sight for Sarajevo," *Gazette*, 30 June 1992, p. B2.
38. "US Pledges to Back Peacekeepers," *Globe and Mail*, 1 July 1992, p. A1; "Fighting halts Canadian convoy," *ibid.*, 2 July 1992, p. A1; "Somebody out there cares," *Ottawa Citizen*, 2 Jul.n3S0 Tc 0 onvo5.5a.Fighting

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48. "Serbs to cut power to Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 14 July 1992, p. A1; "UN bolstering Sarajevo force," *Globe and Mail*, 14 July 1992, p. A1; Linda Hossie, "UN chief, Security Council in battle," *ibid.*, 23 July 1992, p. A9; Sir Russell Johnston, WEU Defence Committee (Thirty-Ninth Session of the Assembly), *The Yugoslav Conflict — Chronology of Events from 30 May 1991-8 November 1993* (<http://ftp.funet.fi/pub/doc/world/AWEU/Documents/yugoslavia-conflict>), p. 11.
49. *UNPROFOR Fact Sheet*, 6 September 1994, p. 1.
50. MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 445-48.
51. "UN convoy arrives in Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 31 July 1992, p. A10.
52. "Canadians pulling out of Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 July 1992, p. A1; Samir F. Ghattas, "Canadians' mission accomplished," *ibid.*, 29 July 1992, p. A6; "UN convoy arrives in Sarajevo," *ibid.*, 30 July 1992, p. A6.
53. A number of officers at B-H command believed it was a Bosnian government official or officials who passed the information to the BSA. It was known that members of the Bosnian government deemed Turajlic an annoyance.
54. Military interview; *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 11 January 1993, p. 4.

### *3. The Kings of Sector West*

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The UNPROFOR mandate in Croatia was to demilitarize the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs) and protect the people within those areas from attack. This meant UNPROFOR would control access to the four sectors, monitor the local police forces, monitor the withdrawal of the federal army (JNA), and ensure weapons were either removed from the sector or stored in UN-designated weapons storage facilities. UNPROFOR was also tasked with assisting UN civilian agencies in resettling refugees.<sup>1</sup>

Brigadier-General Carlos Maria Zabala in conjunction with UN civil affairs representative Gerald Fisher decided to use a “carrot and stick” approach to accomplish the mission. Neither warring party within Sector West was aware the Vance plan provided for demilitarization. UNPROFOR coordinated a series of meetings to inform all parties of the plan’s provisions. The warring factions were

Step 4 — All remaining forces were to withdraw at least five kilometres from the Sector West demarcation line.

Step 5 — Minefield clearance would be conducted by HV and JNA forces under UNPROFOR supervision.

UNPROFOR began demilitarization of Sector West in early June. The HV withdrew their weapons, while the Croatian Serbs placed theirs within designated UN storage areas. There were two large storage depots for light weapons in the Canadian area (near Pakrac) and another depot for heavy weapons in the Nepalese area (at Staragadiska on the Sava river south of Okucani). The storage areas were “dual key.” Local military commanders retained one key and UNPROFOR the second key. The local military was allowed access to the site to perform maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

Demilitarization did not proceed as smoothly in Sector South. On 21 June the HV attacked the Krajina Serb army (RSK) positions in the pink zone near Drnis. The RSK retaliated by bombarding Sibenik. The following day the HV shelled Knin. The shelling and resultant military buildup caused the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 762 which demanded the HV retreat to pre-21 June positions and authorized the deployment of UN forces into the pink zone.<sup>5</sup> Their deployment did not ensure the demilitarization of Sector South and in fact the only sector that achieved temporary demilitarization was Sector West.

The UN mandate in Croatia expanded again in August when UNSC Resolution 769 gave UNPROFOR permission to take control of international borders and customs posts where the UNPA coincided with an international border. UNPROFOR was given additional authority to prevent the entry of arms and ammunition to the sectors. In fact, the Krajina Serbs never allowed UNPROFOR to establish customs posts which they saw as an infringement of their “sovereignty.”<sup>6</sup>

## **Status Quo under PPCLI**

A warning order was sent to 3 Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) at CFB Esquimalt, British Columbia, in April 1992 advising them they would replace the Van Doos and 3RCR in Sector West in September. The battalion was reconfigured for the Yugoslav mission, adding 180 reservists to bring its strength to 876 deployable soldiers. A reconnaissance of Sector West was performed in mid-July 1992 and the battalion arrived for duty in September 1992. Two months earlier Sector West had been declared demilitarized. There were six or seven checkpoints at the entrances to the Canadian section of the sector and two checkpoints established at major crossroads. Battalion headquarters had been established at Camp Polom near Daruvar. Four company headquarters were established at Pakrac, Lipik, Toranj, and Novo Selo.<sup>7</sup> Seventy-five personnel from the Canadian support group established themselves at Camp Polom in September to provide logistics



support to the Canadian battalions. They would eventually expand to 265 and be known as CANLOGBAT.

Aside from providing security and controlling access to the sector, 3PPCLI sent out roving patrols and established mobile checkpoints. The patrols checked which routes were passable and produced maps of their findings. They catalogued towns, noting how much damage had been done to individual buildings. The com-



it was easily accessible to both sides. In October, three Croatian Serbs shot up a vehicle near Checkpoint Whiskey Charlie Nine, killing one Croat and wounding two.

CANBAT 1 patrols were sent out to track down the culprits. One patrol tracked back to a burnt-out house where the Croatian Serbs had stayed before the shooting incident. The Canadians staked it out awhile, but the three men never returned. Patrols were increased along the Dragovic road to keep an eye on the traffic and prevent any reoccurrence.

On Christmas night, two Croatian police were kidnapped, roughed up, and abandoned in the forest. The Croats notified the Canadians that they wished the guilty Croatian Serbs punished. After an investigation 3PPCLI suspected the Croats had done the deed themselves in order to cast the Croatian Serbs in a bad light.<sup>10</sup>

While the Croatian Serbs were sometimes guilty of violent incidents, the effort of the Croats to prove definitively to the UN that the Croatian Serbs wore the black hats increased tensions, prevented a peaceful accord, and made the UN's



from storage. If the UN withdrew from the sector's defence, then they would pass out the weapons. Zabala and Fisher were able to do this credibly because they had four UN battalions (two fully mechanized) to back them and had never demonstrated an unwillingness to use them.<sup>15</sup> They had no sooner talked the Croatian Serbs from rash action when the HV mobilized and moved forward to the UNPA demarcation line. Again Zabala and Fisher went through a series of negotiations and convinced the HV to stand down.<sup>16</sup> By mid-February tension in the sector had eased somewhat. However, the confidence-building measures were much less successful following Operation Maslenica. The Croat leaders were convinced the Croatian Serbs were intractable, the Croatian Serb leaders were doubly convinced their only choice was independence as the Ustasha state would destroy them. The villagers seemed to want to live together peacefully, but they were just too afraid they would be killed if they did so.

The British brought the Warrior, a heavy infantry fighting vehicle that had proved itself in the Gulf War. While the Canadians were acknowledged to be the heaviest armoured unit after the British,<sup>18</sup> the Department of National Defence later admitted “there were serious deficiencies in firepower, mobility and capacity,” with the M113. Furthermore, “self-defence firepower is ineffective against hostile light armoured vehicles due to inadequate weapon calibre, exposure of the fire, and lack of an effective fire control system.” Canadian commanders in theatre confirmed the gun-shield kits attached to the vehicles in 1992 were not sufficient to stop anything more than a 7.62 round. Consequently, 85 M113s, 38 Grizzly APCs, and 16 Bisons in theatre were fitted with additional armour in 1995.<sup>19</sup>

Other equipment shortfalls discovered early on were lack of a counter-mortar radar system. If the HV had attacked Sector West in 1993, 3PPCLI feared they would have had problems locating artillery. Several battalions complained of a shortage of anti-armour weapons and individual night sights. Many times warring factions succeeded in getting close to (or actually penetrating the outer perimeter of) Canadian OPs. Maintenance officers complained of a shortage of technical manuals for the equipment they had to repair in theatre. More tellingly, there were insufficient helmets and flak jackets to distribute to all the battalions that

Despite de Chastelain's misgivings, Canada remained with UNPROFOR until the end of its mission in December 1995.

Canadians posted to Egypt in 1973 had concluded that ad hoc units perform poorly on peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping demands an integrated regiment that has trained and worked together.<sup>23</sup> Doubtless that was why 2RCR was deployed to Bosnia with only eight months between peacekeeping missions.<sup>24</sup> However, Canada simply did not have enough infantry battalions to meet its UN peacekeeping commitments in the mid-1990s. Starting with the deployment of 2PPCLI in March 1993, there was a heavy reliance upon the reserve forces. By 1994 there would be an increased number of reservists serving in theatre in ad hoc battalions as the Canadian Forces spliced units together in an effort to save soldiers from back-to-back deployments.

## **2PPCLI**

2PPCLI in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was notified in October 1992 it would replace 3PPCLI in Croatia. The regiment was unable to muster a full compliment, therefore had to bring in augmentees. Reservists joined the regiment in January 1993, participating in deployment training that included machine-gun, driver, and radio-

Backstop. It rehearsed operations to prevent an HV attack and did a dry run for a Nepalese evacuation (as they were lightly armed). The Canadians felt the main attack would be aimed at the Zagreb-Belgrade highway and planned accordingly.

procedure whereby the guilty party would be released to the opposite faction's authority under UN Civilian Police supervision. He ordered the patrol to give the Croatian Serbs to the Croatian police, which the patrol did when they reached the bottom of the mountain they were on. Calvin had been in the process of notifying UNCIVPOL and had not anticipated that the patrol would find the Croatian police so quickly. He asked the B Company patrol to retrieve the prisoners until he could get UNCIVPOL representatives to observe the arrest and subsequently follow the trial process.

The Croatian police had to travel a road passing through B Company headquarters at Novo Selo. Major Burton, the company commander who was with the patrol, called ahead and told them to lower the gate and detain the Croatian police. The Canadians in Novo Selo detained the police with the Croatian Serb prisoners. However, the police had time to radio that they had been captured. The chief of police called B Company and told them he would mobilize 500 men and attack their headquarters. CANBAT sent a platoon from A Company to assist B Company and there was a standoff.

Colonel Celeketic, the TO commander in Sector West, was pressured to rearm as a sign of support. No one broke into the UN storage areas, but small arms



moratorium. Major Burton and Major McComber were ordered by the UN sector commander to return several rifles seized in the recent operation. In due course four rifles were returned to the Croats.<sup>33</sup> The situation in Sector West deteriorated through the summer. New weapons were delivered to the TO and artillery pieces again appeared in the sector. The number of ceasefire violations steadily climbed.<sup>34</sup>

## **Erdut Agreement**

Despite the UNSC resolution, the HV had never withdrawn from the Maslenica pink zone. On 6 July 1993, President Tudjman announced he would officially open Zadar's airport at Zemunik and a new 250-metre pontoon bridge at Maslenica. The RSK immediately responded by shelling Karlovac, Gospic, and Zadar and threatened to launch FROG-7s at Zagreb. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali issued a warning to Tudjman not to open the bridge and again urged the HV to withdraw from the pink zone areas seized in Operation Maslenica.<sup>35</sup>

Under UN pressure, Croatia signed the Erdut agreement 15-16 July in which it agreed to withdraw all forces from the pink zone by 31 July and place the Maslenica bridge, the Zadar airport, the Peruca dam, and the Milivaki plateau under UN control. Tudjman went ahead with his ceremonies opening Zadar's airport at Zemunik and the Maslenica bridge on 18 July. The Maslenica ceremony was briefly interrupted by RSK shelling of the site.<sup>36</sup>

Tensions had greatly increased in the area. The shelling of Karlovac was the worst since 1991. The RSK had also shelled Sinj, a Dalmatian city south of Sector South. There were reports the HV were burning houses and crops in the areas due to pass to UN control. LGen Jean Cot, UNPROFOR commander, wanted to deploy the UN troops quickly to enforce the Erdut agreement. LCol Jim Calvin was asked to send forces from CANBAT 1. Over a 24-hour period Calvin moved half his battalion the 500 kilometres to Sector South. Part of his unit moved into the Kenyan area to watch the Peruca dam. The remainder operated in the French area, quickly establishing OPs three kilometres from the Maslenica bridge.<sup>37</sup>

As the Canadians were deploying south, Tudjman linked the withdrawal of HV forces to the surrender of RSK heavy weapons to UNPROFOR. There had been no direct linkage in the Erdut agreement, but the Vance plan did specify that heavy weaponry within the UNPAs would be placed under UN control. The RSK felt their territory had been invaded in defiance of the Vance plan and held a bitter grudge against UNPROFOR who had neither warned them of, nor protected them from, the HV invasion in January. As a consequence, they were in no mood to return their weapons to UN storage. The Croatian government used this as an excuse to back out of the Erdut agreement. The 31 July deadline passed and in retaliation the RSK bombarded the Maslenica pontoon bridge on 2 August, sinking the structure.<sup>38</sup>

When it became obvious the Erdut agreement would fail to be executed, Calvin queried UNPROFOR headquarters on whether the Canadians would be returning to Sector West. He had anticipated a temporary deployment and their supplies had run out. They were having difficulty with resupply which was coming 500 kilometres from Sector West. As FREBAT 1 had lost all credibility in Sector South, LGen Cot decided to redeploy the battalions. A Nigerian battalion had been stationed to Glina in Sector North. They had departed in 1993 but had not been



On 1 September the Argentine officers visited every TO OP and told them what was expected. The night of 3 September the UN peacekeepers cut the radio lines to the TO OPs. Ten men and one APC were dispatched along each road to a Croatian Serb barracks or OP to block reinforcements. In the early morning hours of 4 September the peacekeepers seized all the weapons in the OPs and issued receipts to the soldiers. All actions were completed by 0800.



CANBAT 1 received a warning order that it would enforce the Medak Pocket agreement, signed that day. The HV were to withdraw to their pre-9 September front lines, and UNPROFOR would patrol a buffer zone between the two opposing forces. CANBAT was to receive two FREBAT companies as reinforcements. UNPROFOR LGen Jean Cot warned Calvin that the operation must be successful. The UN had untold difficulty in Sector South following its failure to prevent the HV invasion of the Maslenica pink zone. If UNPROFOR failed again it might as well pack its bags and go home, was the feeling.

CANBAT received confirmation of its orders the next day and was issued a four-phase plan.

Phase 1 — Two companies (Canadian and French) would replace the RSK in their frontline positions. UNMOs would confirm the pre-9 September HV frontlines.

Phase 2 — CANBAT 1 would open a crossing from the RSK frontline to the HV frontline. An anti-armour platoon would provide overwatch and engineers would be prepared to clear mines.

Phase 3 — Two companies (Canadian and French) would occupy the HV frontline and the pre-9 September HV frontline. Again the anti-armour



Around 0900 the French moved forward with their APCs and the HV soldiers fell back.

General Ademi, the HV operational zone commander, agreed to meet with UNPROFOR representatives on the evening of 15 September. Colonel Mike Maisonneuve, the chief operations officer from UNPROFOR (a Canadian) and LCol Neilsen (a Swede) came down from Zagreb to attend and LCol Calvin joined them. Accusations flew. General Ademi accused CANBAT of illegal actions. He demanded a copy of the so-called Medak agreement that President Tudjman had

there were Krajina Serb survivors in the vicinity of Strunici. A French platoon was sent to the village but failed to discover any survivors. Every building between Licki Citluk and Strunici was burning or already destroyed. Every animal was dead. A quick sweep was made for survivors between D Company and the French company. Three Krajina Serbs were discovered and dispatched to Medak.

The UN forces continued moving forward gradually and occupied the entire pre-9 September area by 1800, 17 September. For the next two days there were incidents involving the UN forces and the HV over where the exact buffer zone was located. Final negotiations were held on 22 September and all parties signed a map with the agreed boundary lines.

Shortly after (27 September), a French peacekeeper became trapped in a minefield. During the night, Warrant Officer Bill Johnson moved forward using a stick to probe for mines. All he had for illumination was his flashlight. He reached the soldier and carried him to safety. Johnson would receive the Medal of Bravery for his actions.

Four Canadians and seven French soldiers had been wounded during the Medak operation and one CANBAT peacekeeper, Captain Jim DeCoste, had been killed in a vehicle accident behind Medak. There were an estimated 27 HV casualties.

The Canadian and French soldiers were aghast at the ethnic cleansing that had ensued in the Medak Pocket. Every single building in the pocket — 164 homes and 148 barns and outbuildings — had been destroyed. The area was littered with the bodies of pigs, horses, goats, cattle, sheep, and dogs. Most of the wells and cisterns in the pocket had been poisoned. The Canadians believed that every Krajina Serb in the area must have been executed. It was believed their bodies were hauled away in trucks, thus accounting for the hundreds of surgical gloves found (as did the UN, the Croats tried to equip their forces with surgical gloves if bodies had to be handled). There were 16 bodies discovered in the pocket, all killed between 15 and 16 September. They seemed to have been missed by the Croats when they were clearing the area. An old woman between 70 and 80 years was found in a field. She had been shot four times, once in the head. Two women between 15 and 25 were shot and burned beyond recognition in a basement, their bodies still hot from the blaze. Soldiers had to pour water over them to cool the bodies before they could be handled. An old man was found with 24 bullet wounds, all fired from behind. A few days later Croatia would return 50 more bodies. It was a sore lesson for UNPROFOR. They had failed to anticipate that the territory passed to them might first undergo ethnic cleansing.<sup>46</sup>

With the Medak Pocket operation barely completed 2PPCLI passed its duties to 1R22eR, who had returned to Croatia for another tour of duty. The Van Doos



## **Lessons Learned**

Under General Zabala, 3PPCLI felt they had made great progress toward implementing the Vance plan. It was well-known among the warring factions that the UN troops would quickly confiscate contraband weapons. While there were direct fire incidents aimed at the UN forces and mines were a continual hazard, Sector West was considered the only demilitarized sector and certainly the quietest. The UN civil affairs coordinator was able to implement a number of humanitarian programs in the sector.

The biggest challenge to 3PPCLI came during Operation Maslenica when the

sections and several were put on recorded warning.<sup>48</sup> 2PPCLI in some respects displayed the Canadian scramble for forces that General de Chastelain warned of in the autumn of 1992.

Nonetheless, like General Cot, 2PPCLI believed in negotiation backed with force. They underwent several days of combat (in which they were restricted to responding only after attacked and then at the same level of the attack) to ensure the Croatian government kept its word to withdraw from the Medak Pocket. Undoubtedly they had to face that force because under similar circumstances UN forces had withdrawn in January 1993. That withdrawal led the belligerents to believe if they applied enough force, the UN would back down. It was one advantage the warring factions would always retain. UNPROFOR regularly changed commanders, along with national contingents, each with its own military philosophy. The warring factions maintained the same leaders, the same goals, and an ever-increasing knowledge base. The longer the conflict, the more at a disadvantage was the UN.

Both Sector West during the tenure of 3PPCLI and Sector South under 2PPCLI proved that negotiations backed with force worked. Unfortunately, UNPROFOR as a whole did not take these lessons to heart.

## Notes

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 108.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 107; Military interviews.
5. UNIDIR, pp. 30-31.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
7. During the course of the deployment, LCol Jones decided to break his two enlarged companies into four small companies.
8. Military interviews.
9. Military interviews.
10. Military interview.
11. Military interview.
12. *Ibid.*; "Croatian Forces Push away from Zadar," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 4 February 1993, p. 5; Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 2d ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 232; UNIDIR, p. 38.
13. Military interview; "Croatian Of933 .00aY end to(Ds0.00ty3) Tf6(Tbc421.6.e0 T T\*jrys()(3.)-.8(Tha

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14. UNIDIR, p. 38.
  15. Military interviews.
  16. UNIDIR, pp. 108-9.
  17. Military interview; UNIDIR, pp. 185-86.
  18. "Vintage vehicles drive up risk," *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 1993, p. A1; "Equipment 'appropriate,' military assured cabinet," *ibid.*, 22 March 1993, p. A6.
  19. Canada, Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons, *Peacekeeping*, May 1996, pp. 7-24, 7-25.
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  21. Capt Laurie Kannegiesser, "Bosnian Arms Embargo Lifted," *Defence Matters* 1 (October 1996): 32; Canada Land Force Command, "Canadian Peacekeeping Commitments in the Balkans," 17 July 1996 (<http://www.1fc.dnd.ca/english/oper/onu/missions/yougo1.htm>).
  22. "The Jane's Interview," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 November 1992, p. 48.
  23. Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 47.
  24. It returned from Cyprus in late February 1992 and deployed to Yugoslavia in late October 1992.
  25. He was replaced by Jordanian Brigadier-General Shabsoh.
  26. Presentation by LCol James Calvin, Battle Group Commander, 2PPCLI, at CFB Kingston, Ontario, 21 October 1996; Military interviews.
  27. Bruce Wallace, "On the Firing Line," *Maclean's*, 4 May 1992, p. 25.
  28. Military interviews.
  29. "Krajina Serbs to Hold Unity Referendum," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 7 June 1993, p. 6; "Krajina Serbs Warn of Total War," *ibid.*, 9 June 1993, p. 5; "Krajina Serbs Conclude Vote," *ibid.*, 21 June 1993, p. 4.
  30. Lieutenant-Colonel T.J. Calvin, *2PPCLI After Action Report*, p. 3a (Calvin interview); UNIDIR, pp. 109-11 (Hague interview).
  31. Milan Babic had been reduced to his former post of mayor of Knin.
  32. "Tense Situation in Krajina," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 17 June 1993, pp. 5-6; "Krajina Serb Leader says No to Early Unity," *ibid.*, 23 June 1993, pp. 5-6; "Final Results of Krajina Serb Vote," *ibid.*, 24 June 1993, p. 5; "Croatian Serb leader wins hollow victory," *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 June 1993, p. A7.
  33. Military interviews.
  34. UNIDIR, pp. 109-11; Calvin, *After Action Report*, p. 3a.
  35. UNIDIR, p. 39; "Serb-Croat Conflict Heating Up," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 16 July 1993, p. 5; "Croatian bridge could spark fighting, UN fears," *Globe and Mail*, 16 July 1993, p. A8.



## 4. *Destination — Bosnia*

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President Franjo Tudjman and President Alija Izetbegovic signed a military alliance on 16 June 1992. Tudjman gave his blessing for the Croatian Army (HV) and the Bosnian Croatian defence council (HVO) to be used against the Bosnian Serb army (BSA). It was a critical alliance for the Bosnian government as it was dependent upon Croatia for weapons deliveries. The Croatians actually pushed for a much closer Bosnian-Croatian confederation but Izetbegovic balked at that step. It is possible that he was considering the Bosnian Serbs who had remained loyal to his government, whom he had no wish to alienate. It might also have been that Tudjman was not averse to dividing Bosnia with President Milosevic of the FRY. Unsympathetic to Izetbegovic's juggling act, Mate Boban, Bosnian Croat leader, placed intense pressure on Izetbegovic to orchestrate a confederation. When it did not happen, Boban declared the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna on 3 July.<sup>1</sup> There were now three political entities claiming Bosnian territory.

Nonetheless, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims did maintain a military alliance throughout the summer. The HVO and HOS (the military arm of the Bosnian-Croatian Party of Rights) supported by HV forces broke the BSA siege of Mostar. The BSA were pushed back into eastern Herzegovina. In central and northern Bosnia, the ABiH (Bosnian government army) pushed the BSA back



they were escorted to Banja Luka. At Banja Luka, Geburt decided to divide his team. The administrative team headed by the logistics officer would negotiate with local officials for accommodations, rations, and the setup of a base camp. The second operational team, headed by Geburt, would see as much of the area of operations as possible. The entire reconnaissance was controlled by the BSA, but the team did get as far east as Dobož and crossed the front line south of Skender Vakuf to meet with UNHCR officials operating at Vitez. While travelling the mountain route to Vitez the team witnessed first hand the destructiveness of the fighting and sites subject to ethnic cleansing. Refugees were scattered throughout the mountains.

The reconnaissance team crossed back to Croatia on 4 October. Two days later Geburt had the opportunity to meet MGen Philippe Morillon at his hotel. Geburt decided to recommend a base camp at Banja Luka as it was an established site, with a satellite camp at Dobož where there was a UNHCR warehouse. Morillon noted the recommendations and informed the Canadian commander, “I want you back in Belgrade 19 October for the battle group planning session.” Things were apparently going to move as quickly for 2RCR as they had for 1R22eR.

Back at CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick, the deputy commander of operations (DCO), Major Mark Sellers, was running the training program for the regiment. Training stressed the basics: chain of command, working in teams, and preparing for a rough time. They fully expected the convoys to become engaged by the warring factions and so practiced that on the range. The final composition of the battle group was extensively discussed. It was decided the engineering squadron could be cut to a field team. Mine clearing and upgrade training could be provided by the Canadian Engineering Regiment in theatre, but communications needed to be strengthened. A field surgical team was desirable. To meet its requirements, 2RCR was augmented by a rifle company of 1RCR from CFB Petawawa and with units from the parent 5 Brigade. This made the unit roughly bilingual with a 60-percent anglophone, 40-percent francophone, mix. In all there were 970 personnel, including 55 reservists.

Geburt and two of his officers had to meet Morillon in Belgrade on 19 October, so Major Sellers was charged with the deployment to Daruvar, where the regiment would unite with its equipment. As Lahr and Baden-Söllingen were closing, Ottawa wanted 2RCR to take the equipment from the German bases rather than their own at Gagetown. However, everything that was needed had not been stored in Germany. This meant 2RCR had to wait for the arrival of equipment from four bases: Lahr, Baden-Söllingen, CFB Gagetown, and CFB Valcartier. Amazingly, all the equipment and troops arrived at Daruvar as scheduled.

requested document. CANBAT 2 remained in Sector West. Each day they attempted to cross the bridge, without success.

As it became evident that CANBAT 2 was going to remain in Croatia more



Geburt selected an enhanced platoon with maintenance, logistic, medical, and engineering support. About 100 Canadians and Dutch deployed to Banja Luka. However, the BSA never allowed the platoon to conduct convoy operations. They

problem and were prepared to watch for any sign of ethnic conflict. By 10 January their presence was established. The only problem the company encountered in the next three months was when a JNA patrol wandered across the border. This was not considered necessarily threatening as the terrain was extremely mountainous.<sup>12</sup>

In February the UN renamed the mission in Macedonia UNPREDEP and gave it its own force commander. The Canadians were replaced in March by a 700-strong Nordic battalion (Norway, Finland, and Sweden) commanded by Danish Brigadier-General F. Siermirk Thomsen. They were joined by US forces in June 1993. There was a dangerous confrontation between Macedonian and FRY forces in June/July 1994 regarding border demarcation. Each engaged in a force build-up at Cupino Brdo, a massif on the border in northeast Macedonia. The UN obtained border information from both sides and proposed an administrative border that became known as the UN Line. In July 1994, both parties accepted the boundary for UN patrolling and it in effect became a *de facto* border. The UN also mediated a withdrawal of the JNA forces that had entered Macedonia during the confrontation.<sup>13</sup>

In some ways UNPREDEP was the most successful of the UN deployments in the former Yugoslavia. For once, the forces were sent early enough to prevent the

Tarcin-Kresovo road, which at this point was little more than a snowy, icy lumber road with dangerous S-bend turns.

CANBAT 2 was basically tasked to conduct security for infrastructure repair missions inside Sarajevo, provide security for the daily convoys from Kiseljak to Sarajevo, perform traffic control from Tarcin to Kiseljak and from Visoko to Tuzla, provide security for the eastern enclave convoys, and conduct VIP escorts. CANBAT 2 was not tasked with establishing OPs, although they engaged in patrolling and were asked to establish a standing patrol at a coal mine north of Visoko. Two Cougars (general purpose armoured vehicles) were stationed there to ward off sniper fire.

It was not long before RCR discovered that the Kiseljak-Visoko road was subject to constant sniper fire. Things were particularly bad near the hamlet of Buci. Buci was a wooded area near the Bosnian Serb front line (1,000 metres or less). Geburt sent out two Cougars to set up a static overwatch position to protect the vehicles travelling along the Kiseljak-Visoko road. There were two sniper teams deployed with 2RCR. They were sent out to Buci to gather information. They determined that there were ten to twelve BSA positions in the area. Their assessment was that *if needed* they could effectively eliminate seven of those positions. They could likely take out two others. The remaining position(s) could only be harassed by the Canadians. Geburt considered mounting offensive actions as the harassing fire became intense and continuous. However, after discussion with headquarters, it was decided not to take sniper action. RCR continued to respond to harassing fire with the overwatch vehicle's machine gun.

For infrastructure repair missions a platoon would link up with sector headquarters. They would take local tradespeople out to repair infrastructure such as roads, power stations, or telephone lines. There was about a 50-percent chance of completing the mission. The team frequently came under heavy fire and would have to retreat.<sup>14</sup>

Escorting convoys the 30 kilometres from Kiseljak to Sarajevo could be frustrating and dangerous. A convoy would have to go through an HVO checkpoint, cross no man's land, proceed through two BSA checkpoints, and then an ABiH checkpoint into Sarajevo. On a good day the trip would take 45 minutes and three or four convoys would enter Sarajevo. If a convoy made it through all the checkpoints it could be subject to sniper fire in Sarajevo or on the return trip. On one trip an escort platoon was waiting at the airport for a convoy when the airport came under mortar fire. Every Canadian vehicle parked there was hit by shrapnel. On a bad day, the vehicles might return to Kiseljak fully loaded or decide to wait at the checkpoints for permission to cross. The BSA often engaged in stalling

this duty that Master Corporal John Ternapolski became Canada's first fatality in the former Yugoslavia. On 25 March his APC was returning from Kiseljak on a wet, cold, snowy evening. A section of the road collapsed when the APC drove over it and the vehicle tumbled down the ravine to the river bed. Ternapolski was killed while the others in the vehicle escaped with minor injuries.<sup>16</sup>

Although Morillon had stated that CANBAT's primary task would be to escort

Finally able to muster enough forces in eastern Bosnia, the BSA counterattacked Srebrenica on 8 February 1993. The fighting made the situation in the enclave desperate. A contingent of British UN forces commanded by Major Abrams was sent to Konjevic Polje to oversee the evacuation of the wounded from Cerska which had been overrun by the BSA. Abrams eventually had to withdraw as the battle progressed to Konjevic Polje. The counteroffensive that took Cerska spurred on the UN Security Council. On 3 March the UNSC requested the secretary-general to “take immediate steps to increase UNPROFOR’s presence in eastern Bosnia.” As the convoys were unable to reach the enclaves, the United States Air Force began to make airdrops of food and medicine.<sup>21</sup>

Srebrenica stimulated a further use of airpower in Bosnia. The BSA had used light planes to bomb the eastern enclaves. This was despite UNSC Resolution 781 banning military flights in Bosnian air space. On 31 March 1993, UNSC Resolution 816 was passed allowing NATO to shoot down any aircraft violating Bosnia’s no-fly zone. On 12 April, Operation Deny Flight was in place. Dutch, French, and American aircraft patrolled the Bosnian skies enforcing the no-fly zone.<sup>22</sup>

Morillon made the best of the situation. He established a headquarters in the post office and ran up the UN flag. He addressed the residents of Srebrenica from the post office balcony, using a megaphone. Morillon even supported the war council's bid for attention. In a radio interview he stated that what was happening in Srebrenica was "a crime against humanity."<sup>23</sup> The war council told Morillon he







government, including the mayor. A mini-cooperative council was established to



compound or the OPs. When 2R22eR replaced 2RCR in May they were plagued with thefts. One night, four to five ABiH soldiers broke into a CANBAT OP. A

To further undermine the idea, UNSC Resolution 836 passed 4 June 1993 allowed ABiH forces to remain in the safe areas. The resolution referred to Chapter VII without any qualification, allowing the peacekeepers in Bosnia officially to become peacemakers within the safe areas, but then it stated that UN ground forces would not enforce the safe areas.<sup>45</sup> The UNSC probably contemplated enforcing the concept through airpower, a cheap way out of the dilemma, but a rather unsound idea considering the deployment of UN forces on the ground.

Demilitarization was an initial requirement for a safe area, yet only Srebrenica and Zepa were even partially demilitarized. The June resolution indicated the safe areas did not have to demilitarize but would retain safe area privileges. There were never enough UN forces deployed to act as a deterrent. As a result the safe areas became a base for the ABiH to rest, rearm, and then conduct raids and military operations against the BSA. The BSA used the areas to tie down ABiH forces and exert control over the UN by commanding access to the areas (except Tuzla).<sup>46</sup> This abuse of the safe areas drew the UN into taking the Bosnian government's side in the conflict. ABiH soldiers would conduct raids, the BSA would retaliate with a bombardment of the safe area to which the ABiH had retreated, and the UN would then punish the BSA for violating the safe area.

“interrogation.” Within a few days, the UN presence had been removed, and the Bosnian Muslim men executed.

## **Lessons Learned**

No one in 2RCR had received negotiation training before they dispersed. Yet the officers were engaged in constant negotiations at all levels, whether it was for establishing a camp in Banja Luka or the more delicate task of demilitarizing Srebrenica. Such skills as being fair, firm, yet friendly, were important to achieving success. In conjunction with this, it was important that the Canadians had accurate and timely intelligence so they would not be at a disadvantage in discussions. There was a serious neglect of intelligence support to the Canadian battalions. Few of the battalions deployed with trained intelligence officers. None of the CANBATs had a LOCE hookup to NATO, standard equipment for the Dutch and British, to access daily NATO intelligence. Accurate data about troop dispositions, command structures, and political background of the warring factions would have been invaluable to the Canadian officers during their daily negotiations.

While being billed as peacekeepers, the Canadians were enduring a daily combat environment. One of the best ways to keep morale high was to ensure the soldiers were busy and occasionally changed their duties. 2RCR was particularly lucky to have drawn such a variety of tasks. This helped to offset the disappointment of soldiers who had expected their humanitarian efforts to be more appreciated, and enabled the battalion to shake loose from the shock of Master Corporal Ternapolski's death.

CANBAT 2 had been determined to be firm but fair in their dealings with the warring factions. The soldiers had been ordered to return fire at the same level it was received. No one was to conclude the Canadians were easy targets. As a result the Canadians carried out assigned tasks in incredible circumstances, as witnessed by Colonel Vukic's acceptance of the Canadian OPs in Srebrenica. It is also worth noting that the BSA waited until the Canadians had evacuated Srebrenica and the new untested Dutch airmobile company was in place before acting against the enclave.

Unfortunately, other UN contingents undermined the Canadians' efforts by a failure to follow UN standard operating procedures. LCol Geburt was frustrated by other contingents who allowed warring faction searches of their vehicles, which made Canadian passage through checkpoints that much more difficult. MGen Morillon himself undermined the UN's overall effort when he allowed the Srebrenica convoy to be searched and dismissed the military escort. While Morillon's overriding concern with the humanitarian disaster he had witnessed in Srebrenica was understandable, the man who had been in theatre when Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic was assassinated while under UN escort should never have thrown away long-term objectives for short-term gain. The lesson the

BSA took from 1993 was that it could exert control over the UN convoys. In 1994 it would restrict freedom of movement weeks and months at a time and demand a convoy “percentage” when it did deign to allow one through. Srebrenica was lucky to receive a convoy a month due to BSA intransigence.

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## 5. *Conclusion*

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When the 175 men of 2RCR gazed across the snow-covered hills of Srebrenica in April 1992, they knew they had been assigned an impossible task. Yet professional soldiers that they were, they never hesitated in carrying out their duty. In 72 hours they evacuated 500 wounded from the enclave and demilitarized “metropolitan Srebrenica” as requested by the UN Security Council. Their deployment, as well as that of the Canadian battalions, represents a microcosm of the UN deployment to the former Yugoslavia.

For the Canadians, negotiation skills should be more emphasized in officer training and all the units could have used better national and international intelli-

UN for soft-peddalling or backing down. On the contrary, every display of weakness was seized upon and exploited. This was amply demonstrated in Sarajevo in spring 1992 when the warring factions seized weapons and vehicles from the UN and sniped and shelled UN personnel at will. The trick for the UN was to respond in kind without escalating. The anti-sniper teams were a start.

Credibility is essential, as was vividly illustrated by the deployment in Sector West. General Zabala's carrot-and-stick method of rewarding cooperation and punishing violators of the Vance plan made Sector West the quietest of the four sectors in Croatia and the only one to achieve demilitarization. When Zabala departed and the UN eschewed force the situation in Sector West rapidly deteriorated. The summer of 1993 was punctuated by hijackings and random violence.

Sector South provides an equally relevant example. The UN's failure to prevent Operation Maslenica and the HV seizure of a pink zone spurred seven months of renewed fighting between the Croats and Krajina Serbs. It was only when the UN took a stand at Medak and forced the HV to retreat that LGen Cot was able to negotiate a series of ceasefires that ended the violent confrontation.

The UN clearly made the choice to maintain the minimum involvement neces-



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