

LEARNING THE "CIMIC WAY":  
THE IMPACT OF MILITARY CULTURE ON  
CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION TRAINING

by  
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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
The University of Manitoba

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

November 22, 2006

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**FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
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**Of**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to examine the hypothesis that the military has a distinct culture with traits that make it difficult and problematic for soldiers to effectively communicate and cooperate with individuals in other cultural settings and in post-conflict and peace support operations. Most of the data for this research were acquired by participating as a trainee in a twelve-day Civil-Military Cooperation Tactical Operator's training session for Canadian Reserve Force personnel.

CIMIC, or civil-military cooperation, attempts to straddle the divide between civilian and military spheres of influence and as a result, lends itself to inconsistencies and contradictions in both ideology and course expectations. The CIMIC course, by its content, methodology and choice of instructors, challenged traditional military cultural attributes such as rank and hierarchy, group bonding, forceful conflict resolution, and strict obedience. The trainees reacted to these challenges in various ways, but the individuals most invested in traditional military culture had the most difficulty incorporating CIMIC norms and utilizing the new skills.

## One

### Introduction

The circumstances surrounding the deployment of Canadian forces in Somalia in early 1993 received so much negative publicity and public outrage that it is now known simply as "The Somalia Affair". Various actions by Canadian soldiers during the course of the supposedly "humanitarian" UN mission included the torture and murder of Somali teenager Shidone Arone at the hands of Canadian Airborne commandos, the shooting of intruders at the Canadian compound, and the revelation and public viewing of repugnant "hazing" rituals of the Canadian Airborne Regiment. These actions by Canadian soldiers had serious consequences for the Canadian military, resulting in the disbanding of the Canadian Airborne Regiment and a general loss of public confidence in the military. Many books and reports have examined and analysed the failures of the Canadian military in Somalia. According to these sources, the causes are many, among them: lack of effective leadership and cross-cultural training; and *training soldiers for warfare while sending them into peacekeeping and humanitarian operations*.

A number of the studies, commissions and reports which focused on the ethos and organization of the Canadian Forces raised awareness of the significance of a distinct military culture. Anthropologist Donna Winslow, in particular, concluded that the Canadian Forces has a unique culture which adversely affected the ability of individual soldiers to respond effectively to the complex cultural and political climate in Somalia. While the actions of the CAR are not indicative of all trained military personnel<sup>1</sup>, and the Somali research focused specifically on enlisted soldiers, the Somali experience

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<sup>1</sup> Research describing the traits necessary to work effectively in a cross-cultural environment (as was found in Somalia) showed that it is doubtful that an elite military such as CAR should be sent on peace-keeping missions, since "such units are, by definition, self-centred and task-oriented." (Brodeur 1997, 101)



illustrated the need to examine the training and education which soldiers - both noncommissioned members (NCMs) and officers - receive prior to peace operations.

The distinguishing characteristics of the military as described by Winslow and others tended to focus on the war-making aspects of the military, or what has been described as the "combat, masculine-warrior" (CMW) paradigm (Dunivin 1994). However, the Canadian military is involved in many operations which are different from traditional "military might" operations. The term "postmodern military" has been coined to describe a military which is less hierarchical, more focused on multinational missions, is more inclusive of women, minorities and homosexuals, and exhibits increasing convergence between humanitarian and military missions. The extent to which a military is "postmodern" exemplifies ways in which classical military culture is contested in terms of diversity, change, consistency of purpose and even the degree of individual agency within the culture. A postmodern military naturally tends to focus less on traditional military might and more on peacekeeping roles. This change in focus is one of the major areas of contestation within the Canadian military.

The changes in the Canadian military have come about because of a general shift from a bi-polar to a multi-polar structure of international relations which has changed the nature of military peacekeeping and military engagement. The end of the cold war and the resulting geopolitical shifts have resulted in increased intra-state and civil conflict in many regions of the world, changes in military missions and more recently, increased intervention by major Western forces in areas such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Western militaries have become involved in interventions which are very different from either the traditional "military might" or the conventional peacekeeping operations of earlier times, especially with regards to civil-military interactions. Until the early 1990's, defence and humanitarian aid/development issues evolved quite separately in conflict situations, but especially since the conflict in the Balkans, Canadian development aid workers' and some military personnel's mandates have, at least superficially, become

much more similar. The types of activities in which both engage increasingly overlap even while their purposes remain distinct. The main purpose of humanitarian organizations is to try to provide aid and promote development to the most vulnerable; the ultimate aim of the military is to increase regional stability in order to facilitate the earliest possible withdrawal. Within these contexts, new demands are being made on Canadian soldiers and they must be prepared to deal with situations dramatically different from either traditional peacekeeping or traditional war. These diverse military operations may include a number of components in one area of operation: including support for humanitarian aid and development; some type of peacekeeping operation; traditional military operations; and even diplomatic support. These types of operations invariably increase the overlap between military and civilian spheres of influence. One of the ways in which NATO countries are attempting to address some of these issues is to deliberately train soldiers in civil-military cooperation (or CIMIC). The Canadian military, in addition to incorporating a specific CIMIC-training program, is in the process of institutionalizing CIMIC procedure and practice within the broader Canadian Forces system.

CIMIC results from the recognition that where there is a military presence, there must be communication and cooperation between military and civilian personnel. Canadian army CIMIC cells have been directly involved in the relief and development activities in Canadian areas of operation, including rebuilding local infrastructure, providing assistance in project management, initiating economic development activities and improving community relations (DND 2003c). Canadian CIMIC training for Canadian Forces personnel focuses mainly on nontraditional, non-soldierly skills such as negotiation and nonviolent conflict resolution, civil-military cooperation, public speaking and media work, and economic development assessments. The Canadian Forces is responding to the changes in military missions described by deliberately constructing an entity called "CIMIC" and a main focus of this research is to observe and analyze how the soldiers being CIMIC-trained have responded to this construction.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Canadian military personnel are prepared for CIMIC operations in the context of Canadian military operations and to investigate the hypothesis, based on evidence from LaRose-Edwards (1997), Winslow (1997) and Morrison and Plain (1994), that soldiers are trained and socialized in skills and attitudes that make effective communication and cooperation with individuals in other cultural settings and in post-conflict and peace support operations difficult and problematic. I will focus specifically on the selection and preparation of Canadian officers and noncommissioned officers for CIMIC operations, and on individual soldiers' perceptions and level of knowledge about civil-military cooperation. I will analyze the characteristics of "military culture" and will question whether there are particular cultural principles and values explicitly or implicitly imparted which may be at variance with effective peaceful conflict resolution or cultural training.

In chapter two I will argue that based on the classical anthropological concept of culture, the Canadian military has a unique culture with its own values, expectations and beliefs. I will examine military culture from the perspective of organizational culture theory and less-traditional cultural models which take into account the diversity, contestations, changes and inconsistencies not anticipated by the classical anthropological approach to culture.

In chapter three I will contextualize the research setting by describing the geopolitical background and the rise of civil-military cooperation, the structure of the Canadian army and Reserve force, the place and role of the entity known as CIMIC within this structure, and peace support operation training procedure for Canadian soldiers.

Methodological process, rationale and constraints will be outlined in chapter four. The role and place of civil-military cooperation within this distinct military culture will be examined from the viewpoint of the individual soldiers who were being trained as CIMIC personnel within the context of a twelve day CIMIC training session developed

by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and organized and managed by the Canadian Forces Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston, from February 28 to March 11, 2005. The participants in the research project will be described in chapter five, and the course and instructors will be outlined in chapter six.

I took part in the training as a participant-observer - living and eating with other trainees and attending all the lectures, small group workshops and social activities of the group. Through my observations and interactions with the participants, described in chapter seven, I will examine the impact of traditional military cultural values such as hierarchy, discipline, obedience and group bonding on the social interactions and learning outcomes of CIMIC trainees. The relationship between civilians and military personnel is of primary importance to civil-military cooperation and this issue will be described in some detail. Additionally, the process by which CIMIC personnel are selected and trained will be analyzed and discussed within the overall parameters of the Canadian Forces.

The analysis, found in chapter eight, focuses on two main aspects : the perceptions and reactions of the participants to the actual CIMIC training itself; and the role which Canadian military culture played in influencing their reactions to, and reception of, the non-traditional skills and training which was the main focus of the CIMIC training. Some of the key questions relating to these aspects of the training course are:

- What is the set of ideas and ideals of the CIMIC training program?
- How are CIMIC personnel selected for training?
- What is the educational and cultural background of trainees?
- What is being transmitted and do the topics adequately address the issues?
- How did the program implement these ideas and ideals?

Questions relating to the influence of military include:

- What is the character of “military culture” and what role does it play in the transmission and reception of non-traditional skills and training?
- Does traditional military hierarchy affect the ability of CIMIC personnel to work effectively in non-traditional military settings?
- Are there particular cultural principles and values imparted (or assumed) during the training which may be at variance with appropriate peacekeeping behaviour?
- How important are peer interactions during training? Do certain attitudes develop in response to the peer group.

The CIMIC course, by its content, methodology and choice of instructors, challenged traditional military cultural attributes such as rank and hierarchy, group bonding, forceful conflict resolution, and strict obedience. Participants responded to these challenges in various ways, but there were basically two countervailing forces observed: those individuals who were able to comply with the new CIMIC norms, and those who were not able to do so. The extent of compliance depended on a number of variables, including age, rank, education, military occupation, personal qualities of flexibility and open-mindedness, and a desire to learn. CIMIC, or civil-military cooperation, attempts to straddle the divide between civilian and military spheres of influence and as a result, lends itself to inconsistencies and contradictions in both ideology and course expectations. During the training session, these were most readily apparent at the instructional level, and led to frustrations on the part of trainees and a lack of clarity in CIMIC's role and purpose. CIMIC is a work in progress, and it became apparent that the trend in CIMIC is towards a more militaristic position which focuses more on military objectives and less on civilian needs.

## Two

### Military Culture

Numerous recent articles and books have addressed the issue of “military culture”, and anthropologists, sociologists, historians and political scientists have written from the assumption that there is a military culture which impacts behavior and perspectives of those individuals in the military (English 2003, Winslow 1998). This chapter will describe various approaches to the culture concept and determine whether these approaches adequately portray contemporary Canadian military.

#### CLASSICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL CULTURE CONCEPT

The culture concept and the definition of culture have been at the heart of anthropological discourse since the discipline’s first inception in the nineteenth century. The classic anthropological definition of culture still in use is:

A system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and material objects that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning (Bates and Frutkin 2003)

There are numerous variations of this concept, most of which are based on a Boasian perspective which rejects earlier evolutionary concepts of culture. Following Boas, some of the main components of the classical culture concept are:

- Human behaviour is learned and not biological
- Cultural conditioning of behaviour is through unconscious processes rather than through rational deliberation

- Cultural traits assume meaning only when looked at within the context of a particular culture (i.e. cultural relativism) (Summarized from Schwimmer 2006)

Traditional culture concepts share a common understanding that culture is learned, shared, and transmitted by socializations from one generation to the next, and see culture as a set of traits “consisting of identifiable elements” (Brumann 1999: S4). These specific traits, which are not necessarily unique, may appear together in identifiable combinations in different cultures (Ibid: S23). Further, cultural traits are manifested in symbols through which members “communicate their worldview, value-orientations, ethos and all the rest to one another, to future generations – and to anthropologists” (Ortner 1984: 129). Cultural symbols include language, material artifacts such as technologies, art, myths, rites and religious practices. Following Peacock, culture is powerfully influential because it is taken for granted, it is shared, and it distinguishes the “other” as a way of intensifying awareness of its own attributes (1986: 4).

## PROBLEMS WITH THE CULTURE CONCEPT

The culture concept has been criticized in recent years and some theorists have even suggested that the term should be abandoned since the idea of separate “cultures” symbolizes a simplistic differentiation and distancing between groups of people.<sup>2</sup> The use of the word “culture”, in itself, is problematic since it can be appropriated and used as a political tool by academics, policy-makers and politicians for various purposes. Wright theorizes that various actors have used the term for purposes of exclusion and marginalization, as management tools, and as empowerment strategies (Wright 2005). Brumann agrees that while there are problems with the way the term has been used - even among academics - there are good pragmatic reasons for retaining the culture concept,

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<sup>2</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod (1991) states that “Culture is the essential tool for making other”. “Writing against Culture” in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

not the least being the fact that “people – and not only those with power - *want* culture” (1999: S11). Further, “culture”, whatever its precise definition, represents a known concept that is useful within both academic and nonacademic worlds for explication of theoretical concepts and for furthering knowledge and understanding within the general public (Brumann 1999:S13).

However, the traditional culture concept has limitations. It assumes a bounded entity, internal consistency, lack of change, an underlying system of shared meanings, “identical, homogeneous individuals” and compliance (Wright 1998: 3). Clearly, these assumptions do not apply to most situations today, if indeed, they ever truly did. This definition poses problems in terms of diversity, contestation, change and transformation, consistency and the impact of individual agency within cultures:

a) Diversity – While the classical culture concept may not necessarily assume “identical” individuals as articulated by Wright, it *is* based on a relatively homogenous group who uncritically and imperceptibly share a set of values and behaviours. It hardly needs to be stated that the nature and strength of cultural values vary with age, gender, social class, knowledge, and access to power. Culture is not always ethnic, and it is not always tied to identity. Brumann would go so far as to say that anthropologists should “pay due attention not only to gender cultures but also to age, regional, professional, and class cultures” (1999: S12). Additionally, contemporary societies are increasingly porous with continuous movement between geographic areas as a result of economic and political conditions.

b) Contestation – One of the key components of a classical cultural definition is that of “shared meanings” or cultural consensus, but maintenance of cultural consensus requires effort, is problematic and is never guaranteed (Brumann 1999: S11). Further, maintenance of cultural consensus is invariably linked to issues of power and disempowerment. Wright (1998) describes culture as a process of contestation over the



power to define key terms and concepts and to determine how they are used. The actors involved in this contestation may be politicians or other decision-makers, the media, academics, or local, national and international forces.

c) Change - One need look no further than the hegemonic “coca-cola culture” or the spread of Internet and cellular phone use to see that culture can no longer be considered a ‘bounded’ or unchanging entity. While the traditional definition of culture stresses stasis, most current anthropological descriptions of culture include some aspect of movement, or adaptation. Cultural identities are “dynamic, fluid and constructed situationally, in particular places and times” (Wright 1998:3). Culture change may happen as a result of forces within a society or culture, contact between societies, and changes in the natural environment (O’Neill 2006). Sahlins describes a model in which cultural or systemic change occurs when there is a change of meaning in existing relations, as when people in different social positions attempt to enhance their position through culturally or socially acceptable means (Wright 1998). The political economy school, on the other hand, emphasizes the ways in which cultures or societies change as a result of external forces.

d) Consistency – Every society has inherent inconsistencies in core values which are not anticipated by the standard cultural model. The *social structure* of a culture outlines the *ideal* behaviour of its people and is directly and indirectly supported by its laws, traditions, and religious practices. On the other hand, *social organization* refers to the “actual” behaviour of the people, which may be influenced by a number of factors, including “economic and political opportunities, individual ambitions, and conflicting loyalties” (Schwimmer 2002: 22). These inconsistencies may be overtly displayed as ideological or political differences or may be publicly disavowed and denied. It follows then, that a description of the characteristics of a culture’s social structure that does not

fully take into account the “on-the-ground” behaviour of its members is inadequate and superficial.

e) Agency – Additionally, the discrepancy between “on-the-ground” behaviour and core cultural values illustrates the important role of individual agency, in that individuals may act in ways that deviate from stated values. The classical culture concept emphasizes the constraints of culture on human behaviour and tends to underestimate individual agency. A more balanced perspective does not deny that culture has a powerful influence but that “the system can be made and unmade through human action and intervention” (Ortner 1984: 159). Further, while it is anthropological dogma that “culture mediates all human behaviour” (Ibid: 134), no anthropological definition can describe the actual extent to which it is mediated. Some cultures, especially in Western society, emphasize individual responsibility and creativity, impacting the degree to which culture will mediate behaviour.

## APPLICATION OF THE CULTURE CONCEPT TO ORGANIZATIONS

The culture concept has recently been appropriated by various disciplines, notably corporate organizational management, which looks at organizations within the context of distinct “cultures” with identifiable characteristics. Organizational culture definitions tend to focus on the role of culture as a stabilizing force, on the role of leaders, and on the concept of “basic assumptions” (English 2004). These characteristics make an organizational culture construct particularly appropriate to the military context. Further, while the military has traditionally been considered an institution and a “calling”, it is increasingly becoming bureaucratized and officers have come to be considered “managers of human and material resources” (Winslow 1997:25). Schein’s model of organizational culture describes three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions (Schein 1992:12-14 quoted in English 2004: 18). Artifacts are the

visible characteristics and processes within the organization, while espoused values help predict what people may say in a given situations, but not necessarily what they will actually do. Accordingly, basic assumptions are so taken for granted that they are rarely challenged and there will be little variation of these assumptions within the culture. Schein also emphasizes the important role of leaders in organizational cultures, describing how through various explicit and implicit processes leaders teach and transmit culture, and the connection to the military ranking system is obvious. Finally, according to this model, culture plays a role as a stabilizing force and therefore is “a prime source of resistance to change” (English 2004: 17).

Schein’s organizational culture concept assumes the same homogeneous, dominant culture as the classical concept. Pederson and Sorenson while building on Schein’s work, focus on the ambiguities, differentiation, inconsistencies and conflict within organizations (Pederson and Sorenson 1989, quoted in English 2004:20). In particular, they contest Schein’s concept of “basic assumptions”, stating that this concept is an analytical device used by researchers and it is not applicable in real life. In real life, they say, the concept of basic assumptions is too simplistic and further, there is a difference between espoused values - that which is said, and “values-in-use” – actual behaviour. Further, “values-in-use” actually function as guidelines for behaviour in an organization” (Ibid: 21). This differentiation between espoused values and values-in-use usefully focuses attention on possible discrepancies between a group’s formal and informal behaviour, and renders an organizational culture perspective appropriate for military culture research.

### *Summary*

The classical culture concept suggests a static, bounded *entity* which does not take into consideration the fluid, changing and contextualized reality of human groups. An

organizational culture perspective, while helpful within the military context, has the same limitations as the classical concept in that the ways in which a business or a society are “organized” are not static and unchanging. Even more than “culture”, the term “organization” implies a concrete structure, a “finished product responding to a cultural script, and [one that is] not visualized in the active voice, as process...” (Wolf 1990:228).

If the classical culture characteristics do not necessarily apply, then how is it possible to describe a “culture”? Anthropological definitions focus on the patterns of learned and social behaviour of human interactions, not on the individuals themselves. Therefore, while a culture may not exhibit a distinct set of characteristics, it will reflect identifiable patterns of thinking and acting which distinguish it from other cultures. Thus, the culture concept is a useful explanatory tool for the analysis of human interaction.

#### CANADIAN MILITARY CHARACTERISTICS

All militaries exhibit distinctive traits which distinguish them from civilian society: the necessary use of force, the strict maintenance of a hierarchical rank system, absolute obedience, the concept of unlimited liability and a focus on group bonding and group identification.

The necessary use of force as a way of resolving conflict is an obvious common denominator for an occupation which calls for the “lawful application of force” (Duty with Honour, 2003). The continuous employment as a “manager of violence” has produced a military mindset predisposed to violence, “It does not waste time discussing feelings; it dispenses destruction” (Gray-Briggs and MacIver 1999: 6). This affects how the individual war fighting soldier reacts to conflict situations in that he accepts that “the imposition of will implies the use of force...” (Ibid :6).

A traditional and deep-seated military trait, but one which is less likely to be articulated, has been described as the “mean world syndrome”. The mean world

syndrome tends to exaggerate the dangers of the world, and at its most basic level states that one must always prepare for the worst in any given situation (Winslow 1997:16). Winslow implies that this mindset is crucial for the military because, "For the military, the vision of the world as a mean and dangerous place justifies its existence" (Ibid:16). Further, reinforcing the military view of the "mean world" and encouraging aggressivity is important in allowing soldiers to overcome the "basic civilian principle of the sanctity of life and the taboo against killing" (Ibid: 63). Associated with an inclination to prepare for the worst is a belief that overwhelming strength is needed to win the battle (Aal et al. 2000:210).

One of the core tenets of any military is the strict maintenance of a hierarchical rank system. The most obvious example of this is the clear demarcation between officers and noncommissioned members (NCMs). In describing the differences between military life and civilian life, the first and foremost difference which Morton notes is that Canadian Forces members belong to a strict hierarchy, "their place visible in a glance at their uniforms" (Morton 2003: 123). Uniforms, insignia and practices such as saluting and addressing individuals by rank rather than by name illustrate the importance of formal procedure and ceremony in the military. The degree of formality with which individuals address each other has strong implications on the status and rank of people in an organization. The acknowledged purpose for the rigid ranking system in all of its manifestations is combat and learning to kill in combat (Winslow 1997: 20, Morton 2003: 129). Accordingly, the purpose of clear demarcations between officers and soldiers is to encourage unquestioning obedience even in the most stressful and frightening of situations. While officers are trained more in leadership and related skills, obedience and discipline are stressed in the training of all noncommissioned members (Rampton 1970:49, quoted in Winslow 1997: 66)

Superficially, the strict demarcation between officers and NCOs and the emphasis on hierarchy implies that because officers officially have the highest rank, they would be more respected than non-officers and they would be the ones communicating these cultural values. However, the non-commissioned officers are the “acknowledged core of any military organization” (Morton 2003: 138) and it is through their guidance that raw recruits become soldiers. Military literature and common knowledge attest to the tensions between officers and non-commissioned members and the animosity NCMs show towards officers they do not feel deserve their respect. Homans, in his classic 1950 study of human group behaviour, *The Human Group*, states that “To rank high in his group, a man must live up to all of its norms, and the norms in question must be the actual or sanctioned norms of the group and not just those to which the group gives lip service” (Homans 1950: 141) and clearly some officers, no matter what their official rank, will live up to these norms. Although official rank is important in the military, there is an informal system of rank and respect as well.

The defining characteristic of a military is that of “unlimited liability”. Every military person must accept that they may be required to die in the line of duty and ultimately, the concept of “unlimited liability” is what separates the soldier from the civilian. Also implied, and assumed, is that a soldier must also be willing to *take a life* in the line of duty, and to train for war. A corollary of this is that military leaders also have the right to sacrifice the lives of those under their command (English 2004:35). This means that leaders cannot become too close to the soldiers they might need to send to die, and the soldiers must respond without question to an order which they might not accept from a fellow soldier (Winslow 1997: 20). The fact that in a war-time situation officers literally have life and death power over the noncommissioned members implies a type of psychological “power over” the soldiers even in peace-time or in training operations.

The importance of primary group bonding and identification in the military is apparent in training procedures, structural organization and social interactions, all of which are easily observable in popular depictions of the military. Both formal and informal socialization in the army play a part in reinforcing bonding and "the military does things quite deliberately to intensify the power of group pressure within its ranks as recruits are taught the need for teamwork" (Winslow 1997:79). Promoting primary group bonding is yet another mechanism used to transform individuals into a team pursuing a common combat-related goal. Individual needs are relinquished, to be replaced by a common goal, purpose and strong group loyalty.

The regimental system of the Canadian army also plays a role in encouraging strong affective ties, loyalty, and small unit cohesion, although these strong ties can also be a detriment to military effectiveness (Winslow 1997, 1998) since "the greater the inward solidarity, the greater the outward hostility" (Homans 1950: 113). If the aim of inward solidarity is to dehumanize an enemy and promote war-fighting, it will be beneficial to an army unit, but if the group turns on its leaders or on the people it is supposed to be protecting, the results will be disastrous, as in Somalia. Additionally, military camaraderie extends beyond primary group bonding and can be observed as a common pride in the distinctiveness of military service and military members. This sense of pride and uniqueness can impact relationships with non-military members, and result in tension between civilians and soldiers. According to Winslow, some military members view civilians with a "mixture of contempt and unease" (1997:44) and she quotes a Canadian soldier who stated that many military men do not like to interact with civilians at all (Ibid: 44).

The extent to which the Canadian Forces has been successful in promoting the importance of group bonding is evident in a recent survey of Canadian army personnel. According to the survey, "soldiers feel the most commitment to their sub-units (i.e.

company, platoon, section), followed by the Canadian Forces, and then their occupation” (Capstick et al. 2004:43). Further, affective commitment to the group is more important than continuance commitment (for example, the impact of pension or availability of other employment) (Ibid: 43).

Whether individuals come to the military with certain values in place or whether the military inculcates these values through a socialization process is disputed in the literature. Lewis states that basic training is an important process which strips individuals of their normal social ties, completely isolates them from civilian society, and basically rebuilds from scratch by furnishing its antidote, “a system of meaning that restores shape and coherence to the world” (quoted in Winslow 1997:64). Further, Morton states that while basic training is “old-fashioned, ego bruising and controversial,” it works (2003: 127); the end result is (or should be) an obedient, disciplined, loyal and cohesive body of soldiers who are willing to not only risk their own lives, but who are willing to take lives in the cause of their country or unit. According to Bercuson, however, at least in officers “the extent to which new members of the CF embrace military values seems to be unrelated to the intensity of the socialization process. The values a candidate brings to officer training may be far more important in determining the degree to which he or she will embrace the military ethos in initial training” (Bercuson 1996:108 quoted in English 2004:37). They may bring those values with them because prior to joining the military young men have been socialized for their soldierly role, “through family norms, movies, male role models, books, military recruitment campaigns, television programs and children’s games” (Whitworth 2004: 16). At the very least, however, the military socialization process “reinforces certain values and promotes group cohesion” (Winslow 1997: 79). The internalization of military values is not a simple process and there are many factors which affect the militarization of an individual.



Distinguishing symbols and artifacts such as language, rituals, symbols and myths are easily identifiable within the military. Well-known symbols such as uniforms, medals and flags are immediately recognizable as “military” by civilians and military alike. Military terms and acronyms, in particular, constitute a “secret military language” which can only be understood by military personnel (Winslow 1997: 54). Finally, myths, stories and rituals reinforce military values, history and tradition (Ibid: 58).

## CANADIAN MILITARY CULTURE

The Canadian military clearly has characteristics which distinguish it from civilian society, but this does not necessarily imply the existence of a distinct “culture”. While much has been written about “military culture”, is militarism just another way of perceiving the world, such as liberalism or conservatism or is it an actual “culture”? Winslow, based on her extensive and seminal socio-cultural study of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) in Somalia, states that the Canadian army is, in fact, a distinct culture, based on the following characteristics:

- a) It is learned (via socialization such as basic training); shared (there are distinct rules of behaviour and patterns, such as saluting); and symbolic (flags, rituals, medals and decorations) (Winslow 1997, Dunivin 1994).
- b) It has easily observable cultural symbols and artifacts which make it distinct: language (use of acronyms and military jargon), ritual and ceremony, symbols (uniforms and flags), myths (stories and heroism and self-sacrifice) and technology (weapons) (Winslow 1997: 54).
- c) It has well-known core values which inform the behaviour of individuals and social groups within the military: obedience (which is especially emphasized), discipline, loyalty (to other military members and to the nation), truth, duty, valour and sacrifice (Ibid: 65). The Canadian Department of National

Defence's profession of arms manual would add courage and "fighting spirit" to this list (DND 2003:26).

Winslow examined the extent to which military culture, and more specifically, the regimental culture of the CAR, affected the behaviour of Canadian soldiers during the "Somalia Affair" in 1993. She concluded that certain characteristics and core assumptions of military culture affected the ways in which the soldiers responded to the highly stressful and complex situation in Somalia. Military characteristics and core assumptions such as the necessary use of force, "mean-world syndrome", the strict maintenance of a hierarchical rank system, and especially, a strong focus on group bonding and group identification were all factors in the outcome.

Winslow's research also focused on the enculturation of individuals into the military. Army socialization is an important vehicle by which individuals accept the core assumptions of the military. In basic training, the new recruit becomes part of a total environment in which he is stripped of his autonomy and self-will. He becomes part of a group, and the group becomes responsible for each member's behaviour (Winslow 1997: 63). However, anticipatory socialization and self-recruitment also play a role in the process and individuals generally come to the military with attitudes and values conducive to military socialization (Ibid: 65).

Winslow's study focuses primarily on the Canadian Airborne Regiment sub-culture of the Canadian Forces, which had its own distinctive characteristics which differentiated it from the broader Canadian military culture. This group tended to consider itself as elite and separate from other military members, it had its own rituals and initiation rites, it self-selected for individuals who were hyper-masculine and "action-oriented", and it was considered xenophobic and exclusive (Winslow 1997: Chapter Four). According to Winslow, the negative outcomes in Somalia were at least partially

related to these characteristics. In particular, in the CAR group bonding was taken to extreme levels, and "as the individual becomes progressively hyper invested in the group identity, his capacity to relate to others outside of the group becomes significantly diminished and the potential for xenophobia increases" (1997: 86). Winslow's subsequent research into regimental culture illustrated how small primary groups such as the CAR can impede the goal of the formal military organization because the informal networks become so powerful that they work at odds with the formal organization (1998). Winslow's 1997 study of the CAR in concludes that there were a number of factors which led to negative consequences in Somalia, including: "poor discipline, alcohol consumption, hyper-investment in a rebel warrior identity, a vision of Somalis as "the enemy", environmental and psychological stress, and poor leadership" (1997: 270). Poor leadership and an ineffective chain of command is considered a major factor in the Somalia outcome, indicating the problems which can arise when aggressive tendencies as displayed by the CAR are not mitigated by strong leadership (DND 1997).

Winslow's research focused on the CAR, but her findings are valuable within the broader context of military culture study because the CAR characteristics appeared to be extreme examples of a hypermasculined military mindset. In particular, the military's strong focus on group bonding and teamwork and the problems which may arise because of this focus, has important implications for the Canadian Forces as a whole.

While carefully researched and valuable in terms of furthering discussion of the Canadian military, Winslow's analysis implies the same fixed and bounded entity articulated by the classical and organizational models of culture. The Canadian Forces is changing as a result of internal and external forces: it exhibits internal variation, has contested views on function and role, and must contend with increasing convergence with a changing civil society.

## *Diversity*

While the Canadian Forces has an overarching military culture and demographically is superficially homogeneous because the majority of Canadian soldiers are white heterosexual males, there are a number of differences within this greater whole. There are variations in the Canadian army based on differences in rank, age, gender, geographic area, and reservist/regular status.

The DND's manual *Duty with Honour* (2003) describes the relationship between officers and noncommissioned officers as being part of a special "team" and there is generally a structure whereby at each level of command, officers are advised by corresponding non-commissioned officers. Officers and non-officers are segregated socially into three groups: officers, senior noncommissioned officers (warrant officers and sergeants), and noncommissioned members (corporals and privates), and this is exemplified by the different messes (dining halls) found on military bases. The officer is responsible for policy, leadership and for all the administration involved in running his unit, while his NCO is responsible to his officer for day to day operations is especially responsible for "keeping the officer informed of issues to do with the morale, discipline and well-being of the soldiers. In this way he acts as an "intermediary between the men and the officer" (Winslow 1997: 20). A strict division between commissioned officers and noncommissioned members is still maintained with the Canadian army and different ranks rarely socialize together.

Age and rank are by nature intricately entwined, but according to the study, older soldiers "seek greater autonomy, express a stronger sense of duty and ethics and become more pragmatic" (Capstick et al.: iii) and senior officers are more egalitarian, caring and open to others. Younger junior male NCMs, on the other hand show more gender and ethnic intolerance and are strongly drawn to risk and challenging activities (Ibid: iii and 24). In fact, in almost all of the indicators in this survey, junior NCOs (i.e., corporals and

master corporals) tended to score in least favourably in terms of tolerance, caring attitudes and egalitarianism (Ibid: 45). In addition to a higher degree of intolerance, peer pressure seems to have the greatest influence, and the data suggests “it is more important that junior NCOs agree among themselves on a particular issue than it is for them to agree with their chain of command” (Ibid: 45).

The army reserve force historically has been an important part of the Canadian military and continues to be so, as up to 30 percent of some recent CF missions have been composed of reservists (English 2004: 98). In general, reservists are “more individualistic, need to feel connected, have a greater attraction to risk and intensity and need meaning and accomplishment in work” (Capstick et al. 2004:iv). It has been noted, as well, that women have been more easily integrated into reserve combat arms, “where men’s attitudes - with some notable exceptions – have been more amenable to their participation” (Pinch 2000: 167).

There are differences in Canadian soldiers’ attitudes depending on their geographical region, relating to each of four Land Force Areas. Quebec soldiers, in particular, differ from their English speaking counterparts in various ways: they are more likely to consider non-combat operations in Canada as the most appropriate role for the Army, they express more concern for troop safety in combat operations and yet they express more willingness to take on dangerous actions in non-combat operations (Capstick et al. 2004: 25, 26).

### *Areas of contestation*

The diversity within the Canadian army, the influence of Canadian society and the different roles the military must play results in a number of areas of contestation within the culture. These areas include the role of hierarchy, group identification and individual agency, and especially the peacekeeping versus combat role of the Canadian Forces. The

hierarchical system is increasingly being questioned even within the military, and the DND acknowledges that there have been changes in relationship between officers and NCMs and that "teamwork and collegiality will be emphasized over hierarchy" (DND 2003: 75). Pollick (2003) and others assert that the clear demarcations between officers and NCMs are becoming blurred as non-officers become more educated. Rigid ranking is simply less acceptable because of increased individualism and focus on individual human rights within the greater Canadian society, and because it reflects a class system which Canadians no longer accept (Morton 2003: 123). Further, senior NCOs in the Canadian Forces are no longer simply specialists in the "application" of violence, but generally have more education than previously and have management responsibilities increasingly similar to officers (English 2004: 36).

Military orthodoxy states that hierarchy is needed in combat situations because of the need for strict obedience from the men and the psychological need for officers to stay separate from the soldiers they are sending into combat (Winslow 1997: 20). This concept is also being challenged, and Pollick states that the divisions of the ranking system are simply a holdover from historical British class lines, which are now outdated, and that the Canadian military must reflect a more heterogeneous, egalitarian Canadian society (2003).

It hardly needs to be stated that military culture is based on an illusion of masculine strength and prowess in combat, in spite of the fact that most military personnel are not combat soldiers. Dunivin (1994) calls this the "combat, masculine-warrior" (CMW) paradigm. While Dunivin's 1994 study of military culture is based on the American military, her analysis focuses on issues common to the Canadian military as well. The article states that there are different models which depict a continuum of military culture. At one end of the spectrum is the traditional model which describes a homogenous, exclusionary white male force, with masculine values and norms, and at the

other end is an evolving model, with a socially heterogeneous membership, with inclusionary and diverse values and norms. According to Dunivin, while the military is trying to change to a more evolving model, it is "out of sync with its underlying combat, masculine-warrior paradigm" because it is externally imposed by the leadership rather than from within (Dunivin 1994: 540).

Some authors are unequivocal about the durability and uniqueness of the military war-fighting culture and state that at least in the American military, "The military war-fighting culture and the military peacekeeping culture represent distinct professional mind-sets" (Gray-Briggs and MacIver 1999:7) Within the Canadian military, as well, these distinct "cultures" are at odds with each other, although some commentators state that as traditional peacekeeping operations decline and more "robust" peace support operations (such as Afghanistan) gain ascendancy, there will be less of a divide between the two mind-sets (Capstick 2003). Canadian soldiers find many different roles to be appropriate for the Canadian Forces (peace support, disaster relief and combat), but they still show a clear preference for war-fighting roles, in particular, war-fighting in defence of Canada (Capstick et al. 2004: 24). Traditionally the military believes that "Military identity must remain essentially defined by the primary function of applying force in the resolution of political problems" (DND 2003: 70).

### *Change*

Moskos et al. (2000) relate the changes in military purpose and increasing interconnections between civilian and military operations to the increased plurality and profound relativism of Postmodern discourse, and coined the term 'Postmodern Military' to describe a transformed military. This new military, which can be seen in many Western nations to varying degrees, is different from the traditional 'modern' army in that old nationalism gives way to cultural, economic and military transnationalism, an

increased focus on computer-age technology (often called the "Revolution in Military Affairs", or RMA), and a lessening of division between officers and other ranks. A major characteristic of the postmodern military is the increasing "interpenetrability of civilian and military spheres, both structurally and culturally" (Moskos et al. 2000:2)

In addition to this increasing convergence, there are a number of major changes which Moskos et al. argue modern militaries have had to contend with in recent years:

- A diminution of differences in rank and combat versus support roles
- A change in purpose from fighting wars to non-traditional military missions
- More of a focus on multinational missions
- The internationalization of military forces themselves, for example, the multinational and binational divisions in NATO countries. (Summarized in Moskos et al. 2000: 2)

The postmodern military also tends to be more inclusive and androgynous, with the increasing recruitment of women, gays and ethnic minorities. Although only a small percentage of the Canadian Forces personnel, women and ethnic minorities are an increasing reality in the Canadian Forces, and the culture will change (or has already changed) as result of their presence. Miller and Moskos' study of U.S. soldier's reactions to the Somali UN mission in 1993 illustrated how female soldiers were more likely to respond in an empathetic, humanitarian fashion to the Somalis, while male combat soldiers were more likely to have a warrior response to the "other" and see Somalis as the enemy. (Miller and Moskos 1995). There may be advantages to having women included in peacekeeping missions, including an increase in the de-escalation of potential conflicts (Brodeur 1997). The inclusion of women in the military is an extremely important issue that is out of the scope of this paper, but it is only one example of the many recent changes in Western military systems.



Canadian CIMIC focuses on civil-military liaison, humanitarian relief, and development activities and deliberately de-emphasizes the traditional war-fighting purpose of the military. Although a minor activity which involves relatively few soldiers, CIMIC epitomizes the changes which have occurred in western militaries.

### *Consistency*

A nation's military is inexorably linked to its civilian society, and historically - at least in the past fifty years - Canadians have been proud of their military's role in peacekeeping and have tended to underestimate the war-making role of the Canadian Forces. Feminist researcher Sandra Whitworth (2004) describes the importance of Canada's peacekeeping role as one of the "core myths" of Canada's "imagined community". This myth "locates Canada as a selfless middle-power, acting with a kind of moral purity not normally exhibited by contemporary states" (2004: 14). Until recently, most Canadians assumed that the majority of Canadian defence budget was allocated to peacekeeping operations<sup>3</sup>.

The ideological dichotomy between a war-making or peacekeeping agenda is not just manifest as a disjunction between Canadian society and the military, but is also evident within the Canadian Forces itself. Some within the Canadian military establishment are concerned that accepting peacekeeping as a "priority task" will result in an "erosion of the Canadian Army's culture and military ethos" and subsequent loss of battle skills (Capstick 2003: 11). On the other hand, the Department National Defence website has tended to highlight the peacekeeping aspects of the Canadian Forces, and English states that the Canadian army has shown "enthusiasm" for peacekeeping missions (English 2004: 114).

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<sup>3</sup> This perception of the Canadian military's activities as primarily peacekeeping has changed rather dramatically since February 2006.

### *Individual Agency*

The power of group identification and unquestioning obedience in the traditional military is strong, but this may be changing as the military roles change in response to differing political agendas. However, traditional military analysts fear the impact of individual agency and initiative in the battlefield. Historian Morton states that "Preaching ethics is one way of undermining the military's powerful group culture" (Morton 2003: 130). The "three block war"<sup>4</sup> scenario exemplifies nontraditional situations where soldiers may be placed in situations where they can no longer simply "follow orders" but may need to make individual ethical and moral decisions. Individual decisions, historically an officer's prerogative, may now include soldiers of any rank and may contradict the core military value of obedience.

### *Summary*

Winslow's useful categorization of the Canadian military culture describes a classical "culture" with clear-cut characteristics which are easily identifiable as "military". Any analysis of the military must take these traits into consideration. However, the increased diversity, inconsistencies, and internal contestations of core military values must be acknowledged and taken into account in any study of the Canadian army. Further, the extent to which cultural consensus is reached or not reached is a significant factor to consider within the context of change and adaptation. The Canadian military is being modified as a result of changing civilian norms and political circumstances. Therefore, a more fluid cultural definition which takes into account

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<sup>4</sup> The three block war is a term currently in vogue in military discourse. It describes a hypothetical situation where the military may, within three city blocks, be conducting combat operations on one block, stabilization and peacekeeping operations on a second, and on a third block be providing humanitarian aid.

temporal and situational aspects is a useful framework from which to analyze the ways in which the values and principles of the Canadian military affect the behaviour and responses of individuals within the culture. A more flexible definition is particularly appropriate because of the changing military environment and the many actors involved in a contestation over its role: the public, the government leaders, the media, and the different sub-groups within the military - officers, common soldiers, and military policy makers.

### Three

## Background

#### GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT

While Canada has played an exceptionally important part in peacekeeping ever since Pearson's historic establishment of a peacekeeping force in the Suez Crisis of 1956, its contribution to peacekeeping has been somewhat exaggerated, and today's "peace operations" very different from Pearson's vision of interpositional peacekeeping. In traditional peacekeeping, the main elements included noncoercion and impartiality and, most importantly, the forces were there by consent of the two conflicting parties. "Second generation peacekeeping operations", so named to differentiate them from traditional peacekeeping, are much more complicated and diverse, and often involve greater use of force by the "peacekeepers". Some of the characteristics common to second generation peacekeeping are: a rationale for conflict often based on ethnic violence, hatred or revenge and not involving traditional government forces; a change in war-zone to include urban population centres; and increasingly multilateral actors, including, among others, NGOs, bilateral donors, and the media (Cumner 1998: 2). Since many second generation peacekeeping missions take place within the context of an on-going conflict, there is increased probability of "mission creep", whereby what started out as a humanitarian mission (that is, a Chapter VI operation) turns into a traditional military operation (that is, a Chapter VII operation).

Terminology adds to the confusion as well. While the term peacekeeping can include traditional interpositional peacekeeping, second generation peacekeeping includes peace *building*, which generally means post-conflict reconstruction and institution-building, and peace *making* and peace *enforcement*, both of which are much

more robust operations than traditional peacekeeping.<sup>5</sup> As well known Canadian military historian Jack Granatstein states: "Since the end of the Cold War, when Canada does peacekeeping...it's really doing peacemaking or peace enforcement, both of which are just synonyms for war" (Granatstein 2004: quoted in Anker 2005: 28). The term "operations other than war" (OOTW) has been used predominantly in American literature, but the current preferred term for the Canadian Forces is *Peace Support Operations* (PSO). PSO is used to describe a wide array of military operations which may involve a combination of humanitarian aid, more traditional peacekeeping, traditional military forces and even some form of diplomatic/nation-building support

Whatever terminology is used, and however different each circumstance may be, militaries are being placed in situations which are far more complicated than a basic war or peacekeeping scenario. In addition to the more traditional military and civil affairs work, they must communicate and cooperate with non-traditional allies such as nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs).

Tensions between the military and civilians, especially NGOs, while always present, have increased since the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the subsequent occupation of U.S. forces and the perceived encroachment of military forces into the humanitarian sphere. The well-publicized situation in October 2001 whereby the U.S. military made food drops in Afghanistan while simultaneously continuing air-strikes almost caricatured the problems which arise when the lines between military and humanitarian interests and activities are crossed (U.S. Dept of Defence 2001). Hansen stated that, especially since Afghanistan and Iraq, "There is a strong perception in the humanitarian community that they are losing access to populations in need, that some

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<sup>5</sup> "Robust" appears to be a favoured military term used to describe a stronger show of force.

areas are “no-go” for humanitarians. There is an *increasing* blurring of lines between humanitarians and the military” (Hansen lecture 2006).

## THE CANADIAN ARMY AND RESERVE FORCE

The Canadian Army is composed of the Regular Force - members who are enrolled for continuing, full-time service, and the Reserve Force - members who are not generally full-time. All Canadian Forces members, reserves or regular, are assigned to serve in a unit called a squadron, battalion, regiment or any other appropriate designation. A formation is an element consisting of two or more units grouped under a single commander and army units or other elements (such as formations) are assigned to a ‘command’. In the case of the army, all army units - regular or reserve - are within the auspices of one of four Land Force Commands: Landforces Western, Landforces Central, SQFT - Quebec, and Landforces Atlantic. The basic fighting component in the army is the unit and each self-contained unit is led by a commanding officer: “Units are characterized by type as combat arms (armour, artillery, and infantry), combat support arms (field engineers, signals, intelligence, and tactical aviation), or combat service support (transport, maintenance, supply, medical, dental, and military police)” (DND website [www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol1/vlc3.htm](http://www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol1/vlc3.htm)). In the Canadian army, the major battle unit is a battalion (comprised of approximately 800 soldiers) which is led by a commanding officer, usually a lieutenant-colonel, and within this battalion are sub-units such as companies, platoons, and sections, each led by an officer or in the case of a section, by a noncommissioned officer. (See Appendix A for Canadian Ranks and Appointments).

Military hierarchy is displayed not only in the rank of individuals, but also in the processes by which decisions can be made, manifested most clearly in the strictly enforced military *chain of command*. The chain of command is “a military instrument joining a superior officer to other officers and non-commissioned members of the

Canadian Forces” (Report of the Somalia Commission of Inquiry, [www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol1/voc3e.htm](http://www.dnd.ca/somalia/vol1/voc3e.htm), 2005). This method of decision-making and governance is often mentioned as one of the most obvious examples of the differences and points of contention between military organizations and civilian organizations (Beauregard 1998, Winslow 2000, CIMIC training course 2005).

According to the Department of National Defence (DND) website, the primary role of the Reserve Force is augmentation, maintenance and support of deployed regular forces. There are four categories of reservists: primary reserve, supplementary reserve, cadet instructors cadre and Canadian rangers. The primary reserve, just like the Regular Forces, consists of officers and non-commissioned members, is composed of navy, army, air force and communication members, and members are trained in similar ways to the regular forces. The army element, also known as the militia, is comprised of 132 units commanded by the Commander of Land Force Command (LFC). The army reserves are organized geographically into four Areas which are made up of a total of nine Canadian Brigade Groups. A member of the army reserve is considered a paid part-time (or sometimes full-time) member of the CF. There are three different classes of reservists: class A is a part-time reservist (the most common and familiar), class B is a full-time reservist, and class C is a full-time reservist who is filling a regular force role when overseas on a mission. Class B, or full-time reservists not on a mission, comprise from 15% to 20% of reservists, and are generally hired for three month to three year term positions. Full-time reservists' wages are 15% less than regular but they have more flexibility in choosing their missions and responsibilities. The Supplementary Reserve is a sub-component of the Reserve Force consisting of officers and non-commissioned members who are former members the Canadian military and who can be re-instated if they have special skills or expertise for which there is a military requirement. Members of the Supplementary Reserve do not attend any kind of regular military trainings except

when on active service. There are currently more than 26,000 Canadians serving in the Canadian Forces Reserves (DND website January 2006).

Reserve units usually "parade" one or two nights a week and one weekend each month at the unit (often an armoury) and parades often include a two week concentrated field training in the summer. Reservists may, if desired, volunteer for overseas assignments overseas with the regular force, or with Canada's NATO or UN commitments. Some reservists receive specialized training and collective training which takes place during the summer months. An individual can become an officer in the reserve forces by direct entry if a graduate of a university program or a three year community college program. One can also apply to be one of fifteen applicants per year accepted into the Reserve Entry Training Program through the Royal Military College. Others become officers by being transferred from the noncommissioned ranks.

#### CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION - CIMIC

Civil-military Cooperation or CIMIC, while well established in some European countries and in the United States, is a relatively new field in Canada. The first Canadian CIMIC cell was established at 1 Canadian Division Headquarters in 1997 as a result of Canada's military and peacekeeping involvement in the Balkans. The role of Canadian CIMIC only came to the fore in 2000, when the task was given to the Reserves and when it was decided that the army needed specialists for civil-military cooperation work. CIMIC cells, or teams, are relatively small groups of Canadian officers and noncommissioned officers who enter a Canadian area of operation and act as liaison agents between the Canadian military and civilians. CIMIC is defined by the Canadian army as "a military function with the role to support the Commander's mission by establishing and maintaining coordination and full cooperation between the military force and all civilian actors in the Commander's Area of Operations (AO)." (Peace Support



Training Centre 2004:7) The Canadian army states that CIMIC is applicable to a full spectrum of military operations, from combat to peace support operations to humanitarian and disaster relief. Canadian CIMIC operations may occur in any UN led or NATO supported Peace Support Operation or through “multinational ad hoc arrangements” (DND 1999). In a NATO operation, CIMIC activities are conducted in support of a military mission and/or because civilian authorities are not able to carry out a task. Commanders at all levels are responsible for directing CIMIC activities. (Pearson Peacekeeping Centre: 2004b)

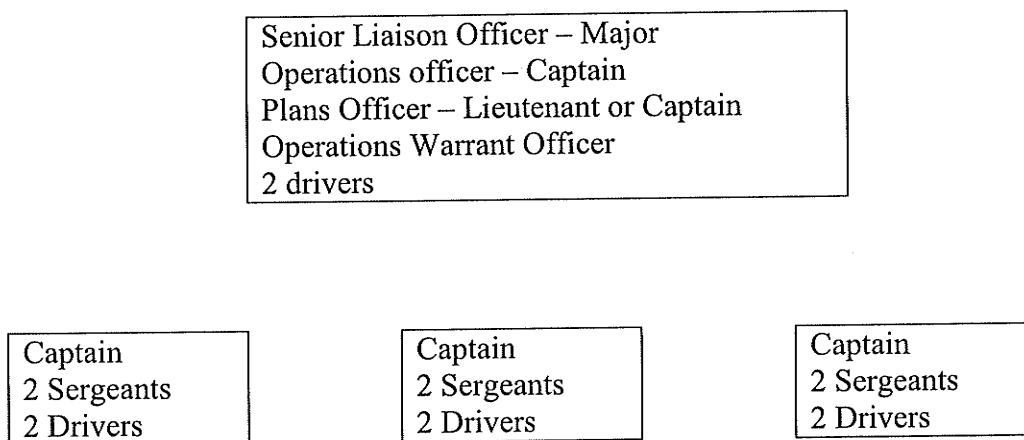
The three core functions of CIMIC are to act as: civil-military liaison; support to the civil environment; and support to the force (Peace Support Training Centre: 2005). The DND *Precis* on CIMIC includes the following variety of activities within the CIMIC mandate:

- Liaison with civilian organizations at all levels;
- Preparing continuous assessments of civilian population needs in order to identify any vacuum and how that vacuum might be filled;
- Participation in the Commander’s decision making process and providing input to the campaign plan;
- Conducting ongoing analysis of the civil situation and assessing the implications on military operations;
- Engaging in integrated planning with civilian agencies; and
- Working towards a timely and smooth transition of civil responsibility to the proper authorities (Pearson Peacekeeping Centre 2004a:9).

Civil Affairs generally, and CIMIC in particular, is always a Reserve capability purportedly because reservists bring their civilian perspective and transferable skills to the operations and having both military and civilian experience is considered an obvious

asset when acting as liaison between the two worlds. On a pragmatic note, one officer noted that CIMIC has to be reserves, since CIMIC plays a relatively minor role in the overall Canadian Forces, and there is too little “value-added” to train regular forces to fulfill a CIMIC role (Chadwick: 2005).

Until recently, a CIMIC team might consist of as little as an officer and a driver (a non-CIMIC trained noncommissioned soldier), or as in the case of a CIMIC team deploying to Bosnia in April, 2003, it consisted of 11 CIMIC Liaison Officers and nine drivers. (Department of National Defence: 2003b). As of 2005, there was not yet an established Canadian CIMIC staff organization for all operations, and the structures were dependent on the size, type and scope of the operation, although a standardized 21 person CIMIC unit was envisioned for future operations. The changing needs of current conflict and post-conflict situations have resulted in increased support for CIMIC and a growing acceptance for the need for effective CIMIC operations. There is now a director of CIMIC - a full colonel - who is pulling the four Canadian areas together and working on a standardized structure, and a new standardized deployable unit consisting of 21 personnel. This standardized unit, which would be deployed with each Canadian Forces task force, would be structured as follows:



*Figure 1: Standardized CIMIC structure*

The hope is that there will be four CIMIC detachments deployed in any given year, and two more "surge" CIMIC units waiting and ready to be deployed as needed. Therefore, the Canadian Forces is getting ready to prepare and train six CIMIC units annually. Each of the four landforce areas will have their own CIMIC detachments which will train and deploy as a team. CIMIC units operate under a Canadian commander in a specific area of operation in which Canadian Forces are deployed.

As the schematic shows, there are a number of different positions or jobs within the twenty-one person unit, for example "operations officer" or "plans officer", but all of these personnel are generically called "CIMIC operators" and there was no specialized training for the various positions in the CIMIC course. Presumably there is a great deal of on the job training once in the field.

Logistically, CIMIC operators generally work in an established "CIMIC Centre" and the makeup of this center depends on the military, political and geographic context. In a high risk area (such as Afghanistan) the centre will likely be situated within a military compound, but in lower risk post-conflict situations (such as Bosnia) the centre may be a stand-alone house which can be used as both an office and living area for the CIMIC operators. According to the CF44E course guide, the CIMIC Centre :

- 1) Provides a focal point for liaison with civil bodies in order to provide visibility and allow for harmonization of military, civil and humanitarian activities within the AO (Area of Operation);
- 2) Enables Headquarters CIMIC staff to focus on mission support by shifting much of the liaison function away from the HQ;
- 3) Provides guidance on military support to civil bodies and projects;
- 4) Provides facilities for civilian bodies such as meeting facilities, maps, and access to communications, security information etc.; and

- 5) Facilitates information exchange (Pearson Peacekeeping Centre: 2005).

The primary objective of CIMIC is to transition authority to the civil authorities, so that they can function without the military force in the AO (Area of Operation). CIMIC works with other staff branches in the army, such as Public Affairs (PA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), and is considered an integral part of the forces' *Information Operations* plan. According to the DND precis on CIMIC, PSYOPS supports CIMIC by helping to "mould the opinions, attitudes and behaviours of foreign groups to support Canadian national objectives", while Public Affairs ensures information superiority by "establishing programs that provide a fair, balanced and credible presentation of information that communicates the Army's story" (Ibid: 9).

While the interaction between PSYOPS and CIMIC is overt and considered necessary, it is important that the trust relationships which CIMIC personnel develop with civilians are not compromised and that transparency and trust is maintained. The Canadian military distinguishes between "passive" information gathering and "active" information gathering and makes it very clear that CIMIC operators only take part in "passive" information gathering. This means that while a CIMIC person must never actively gather information for intelligence purposes, if he or she learns about important information which might impact force protection, it is his or her duty to report this information to Intelligence. Participants in the CIMIC training course were cautioned that they need the trust of the community and that they must never abuse that trust by actively gathering information for the forces.

Public relations and even personal anecdotes told by previous CIMIC personnel tended to emphasize the project and "warm and fuzzy" aspects of CIMIC operations - the chance to re-build schools and help feed hungry people, and even a recent issue of "The Maple Leaf", the weekly national newspaper of the DND emphasized this aspect of

CIMIC. However, military literature and CIMIC doctrine emphasizes the military aspects of CIMIC. The military considers CIMIC operations to be *force multipliers*, defined as a capability that, when added to and employed by a combat force, significantly increases the combat potential of that force and thus enhances the probability of successful mission accomplishment (U.S. Department of Defense: 1999).

## PEACE SUPPORT TRAINING

The only common training which all Canadian soldiers must attend in order to become part of the Canadian Forces is a ten week Basic Military Qualification Course, or “basic training”. This is where civilians learn to be soldiers, and study policies and regulations of the Canadian Forces, basic safety procedures, drill dress and deportment, and weapon handling. Basic training is the first step in socializing an individual into the military ethos. In addition, the infantry, which is the backbone of the fighting force and all others in the “Combat Arms Team”, take part in a sixteen week Battle School. It is military orthodoxy that all military personnel must be trained and prepared for combat, and many senior leaders in the Canadian Forces believe that this is true even if only a small percentage are actually in combat units (Pinch 2000:176). However, there is no proof that combat training is necessary for all military and “combat/operational training does not provide all the necessary skills or knowledge or the orientation required for the array of peacekeeping and civic tasks which could be assigned” (Pinch 2000: 176).

In addition to regular military training, all Canadian Forces members, both non-commissioned members and officers, selected for deployment on a peace support operation, are required to take part in a seven day Peace Support Operations (PSO) mission specific training course given by the Peace Support Training Centre. The seven-day Basic Peace Support Operations Course, focuses primarily on “non-traditional military subjects” including, among others, stress management, preventive medicine,

negotiation and mediation techniques and cultural awareness (Department of National Defence: 2003c).

Military training, especially combat training, “prepares men and women to do two unnatural things: to destroy fellow humans and to risk one’s own life” (Morton 2003: 126). Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, a former U.S. military psychologist at West Point Military College, states that there is an incredibly strong resistance to killing other human beings, and that all human beings (including soldiers) must be trained to kill, even in war-time (Grossman 1995: xxix). Since war is not a new institution, there are time-tested ways that militaries have used with men to do this: unquestioning obedience, male bonding, class divisions between officers and non-officers, and uniformity.

From a civilian perspective, the act of training in the Canadian military (and perhaps in all militaries) seems to have an importance beyond the ordinary. While it is certainly a means to an end, in that soldiers must be expertly trained for their particular task in a mission environment, it also appears to be simply an end in itself. In the reserves, there are many individuals who will never take part in an overseas mission, but who will spend their military careers training for that possibility. Irwin describes the military as a “contingent” organization – an organization that is designed to prepare for certain tasks but which may never actually be called upon to perform them (2005: 94).

The influence of peer interactions in training sessions is not a common area of study, but data from DND’s extensive 2004 study of Canadian soldiers indicates that “it is more important that junior NCOs agree among themselves on a particular issue than it is for them to agree with their chain of command” (Capstick et al. 2004: 45).

The military training and socialization of noncommissioned members and officers are fundamentally different, in that officers are “trained to be *managers* of violence while NCMs are the *technicians* of violence” (Winslow 1997: 65) (my emphasis). While all officers in training must take university level courses in which they study ethics, personal

integrity, professional responsibility and conduct issues, and even nonviolent conflict resolution, there seems to be an implicit assumption that the common soldier does not need to have significant training in matters of ethics and alternative conflict resolution. Apparently these will be passed to them through their officers and the officers' decisions. NCMs are not meant to be independent thinkers, they are to be transformed from "self-interested, rights-conscious individuals into the loyal, dependable parts of a complex military machine" (Morton 2003:125).

The types of skills needed in the field depend on various factors, including military occupation and training, type of military operation, and, critically, rank. According to Last (1997), officers on operations use significantly more "contact skills" such as negotiation, investigation, mediation and liaison activities, than do non-officers. Further, "contact skills are increasingly important with increasing rank", and it is as "*managers of violence*" (my emphasis) that officers must control and de-escalate violent incidents (Last 1997: 127). However, while lower ranking NCMs will be less likely to utilize contact skills, these types of activities are increasingly important in peacekeeping situations and may be used by all ranks (Ibid: 81).

The "Somalia Affair" and the resulting reports and studies highlighted the need for soldiers to be better prepared for complex emergency situations. What type of education or training, then, is necessary to give peacekeepers, in particular CIMIC personnel, the skills they need to work within a cross-cultural setting, to communicate with members of the NGO community, or to oversee a "development" initiative? Moskos, in his landmark 1976 sociological study of peacekeeping in Cyprus, *Peace Soldiers*, states that while it is generally assumed that substantial peacekeeping training is required to "restructure the soldierly role away from reliance on coercive measures toward a model fostering the absolutely minimal use of force", his research says differently, and, in fact, military professionals are readily adaptable to the peacekeeping

role. While Moskos' research on peacekeeping is well respected, it must be recognized that, when *Peace Soldiers* was written, the peacekeepers' mandate was more straightforward. Current literature notes that the many changes in the mandate and structure of contemporary military operations have resulted in different training requirements for military personnel (Socin and Duone 2001, LaRose Edwards et al. 1997, Cumner 1998). Socin and Duone list a number a subjects which should be included in pre-mission peace operation training, including "political, economic, social, cultural, religious, ethnic and geographical features of the mission area" along with more practical topics such as first aid, mine awareness and driving skills (2001: 5). LaRose-Edwards et al. include specialized training in conflict mediation and resolution, and dealing with issues of human rights violations and humanitarian assistance as important factors in peacekeeping training (1997:48). While the need for conflict resolution skills may vary with rank, in peace support operations, where smaller and smaller sub-units are deployed and where junior personnel are faced with situations in which they need to make choices and decisions, training of soldiers of lower rank should ideally include communication and conflict resolution skills (LaRose-Edwards et al. 1997:59). Peacekeeping doctrine suggests that NCMs should have basic "contact skills" – that is, interpersonal communication skills - for handling difficult situations such as hostage-taking. Key officers should have more advanced contact skills, "for managing meetings, three party mediation efforts, the use of translators and interpreters and so on" (Last 1997: 96).

In the military, 'training' usually refers to the structured learning of perceptible skills, and the term 'education' commonly refers to the communication of knowledge (Brodeur 1997: 104). In the traditional military mind-set, this usually means that NCMs receive *training*, while officers are *educated*. Although in recent years the Canadian Forces has somewhat modified the strict education or "thinking" skills for officers/training or "trade" skills for NCMs dichotomy, the training still reflects a



traditional organizational reality of large, cohesive military units with a few top people in decision-making roles. This type of organization may not be appropriate in peacekeeping situations, where smaller and smaller sub-units are deployed and where junior personnel are faced with situations in which they need to make choices and decisions (LaRose-Edwards et al 1997:59). Peacekeeping training, therefore, must reflect this changing reality and provide more thorough training for NCMs as well as officers.

Some American military writers assert that using combat-trained troops for peacekeeping operations leads to a deterioration of their combat skills and that they need to be subsequently retrained in order to return to 'combat ready status' after taking part in peacekeeping missions (Miller 1997, Gray-Briggs and MacIver 1999). Lt Colonel N. Winn Noyes of the U.S. Army comments on using the same force for both combat and peacekeeping, "It is a problem of changing required mindsets, desired automatic reactions and conditioned responses, with insufficient time and training for reorientation of the soldier who must accomplish the tasks. The required mental transition is significant" (quoted in Gray-Briggs and MacIver 1999). It follows then, that if there are problems *re-orienting* combat soldiers to the combat mode after peacekeeping, there would be problems *orienting* them to a peacekeeping mindset in the first place.

Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance provides insight into the difficulties of training soldiers for less battle-related peace support operations (1957, described in Atherton 2005:1). This theory refers to the process which humans go through when what they encounter a discrepancy between what they have been taught and believed and what they actually experience. Atherton (2005), referring to the learning and teaching process, states that cognitive dissonance causes two side-effects for learning. Firstly, individuals are likely to resist new learnings which contradict what they have been previously taught (and which they believed in). Secondly, "if learning something has been difficult, uncomfortable, or even humiliating enough, people are less likely to concede that the

content of what has been learned is useless, pointless or valueless.” (Atherton 2005: 1) The implications of this statement are obvious in the context of soldiers who have taken part in basic training, which is “old-fashioned, ego bruising and controversial” (Morton 2003:127) and battle trainings which emphasize hardship, deprivation and physical power. Cognitive dissonance will occur in these individuals as they attempt to set these teachings aside and take part in training sessions which emphasize cultural context, negotiation and non-violent conflict resolution.

Soldiers working in civil-military cooperation inevitably become involved in tasks which traditionally fall within the auspices of relief and development agencies, and nongovernmental organizations in particular are concerned that militaries are encroaching on their territory. Good intentions notwithstanding, untrained individuals can do more harm than good when becoming involved in complex situations which require highly trained personnel and indepth knowledge of the political and economic context. In addition to being concerned about the blurring of lines between military actions and relief and development aid, and the resulting loss of credibility and trust in non-military actors in the field, NGOs fear that military personnel do not have the training necessary to make good development decisions.

#### CIMIC-SPECIFIC TRAINING

A CIMIC unit may be incorporated into any military operation, from post-conflict peace building mission to actual war situations, and in every instance, CIMIC operators will be called upon to incorporate “peacekeeping” attributes such as nonviolent conflict resolution and other interpersonal skills, cross-cultural knowledge, and knowledge of relief and development organizations and activities. The Canadian Forces attempts to address this by providing specialized civil-military cooperation training to all potential CIMIC operators. All CIMIC personnel (officers, NCOs and non-commissioned

members) taking part in an overseas deployment are required to attend approximately six months of mission-specific training involving three months of refurbishing typical soldier skills, and two to three months of mission-specific cultural awareness. As well, officers and NCOs take part in the specialized CIMIC training and other related training sessions. Included in this preparation will be some language training and education on the law of armed conflict course and on a NATO CIMIC document. As has been noted, CIMIC is a reserve force capability and all reserve personnel must participate in this six month pre-deployment training, meaning that they must leave their civilian jobs for a full year for every six month overseas deployment.

Until recently there was no standardized training for CIMIC personnel, although in past years some Canadian Forces officers took part in CIMIC training at the international Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. Starting in 2005, the Canadian army has taken over responsibility for training its own personnel in CIMIC procedure, and as the role of CIMIC gains importance and significance and becomes institutionalized, the selection and training process is becoming more refined. All CIMIC officers and NCOs must now, at minimum, take part in the two week CIMIC training course. Non-commissioned members below the rank of sergeant do not receive specialized CIMIC training if they are assigned to CIMIC units.

There is wide range of courses available to officers and NCO reservists interested in CIMIC, including courses on negotiation training and conflict resolution, project management, cultural awareness, media awareness, sexual harassment and using an interpreter, among others. As of 2005, one of the four landforces - Central Land Force - was encouraging CIMIC personnel to take language courses over the year prior to deployment. It hopes to have people take one of 5 languages - Spanish, French, Russian, Arabic and Pashtu during the year and then do two days of intense language training immediately prior to deployment.

The level and depth of an individual's CIMIC training appears to be contingent on a number of factors: the individual's personal interest in taking part in various training sessions; the support of the individual's commanding officer; and perhaps most importantly, the Landforce Area in which the individual resides. Although CIMIC as a whole is becoming more structured and systematized, selection processes and to some degree, CIMIC training still varies within the different landforces. According to CIMIC organizers, Central Landforces area, which encompasses Ontario, has the largest cohort to choose from, so its selection process is fairly rigorous and it does the most stringent selection process in Canada. Suitable people are chosen on the basis of a personality profile and observations made of them during four role-plays. They are judged on their intercultural sensitivity, ability to work with NGOs, and respect for other views<sup>6</sup>. According to one officer, an individual's personal attributes are more important than any kind of training or skills, military or otherwise:

*CIMIC is far more about relationships and personality than about skills, military or otherwise... The best platoon commanders would not be good CIMIC operators (Chadwick 2006).*

The other three landforce areas do not appear to be as structured and it appears that many individuals can still be accepted into the program with a minimal filtering process. The selection process seems to have generally improved since 2002, when an officer in the Western Landforces noted that they were having trouble finding volunteers

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<sup>6</sup> Feminist author Sandra Whitworth comments on military peacekeepers in a way that is particularly appropriate to CIMIC: "Soldiers do not always make the best peacekeepers; sometimes it is carpenters, doctors or lawyers who do, and sometimes it is soldiers who bring to bear a variety of skills that are not unique to soldiering", Sandra Whitworth (2004). *Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

for CIMIC and that it was basically available to anyone who volunteered. While each landforces organizes its own advanced CIMIC training sessions, there was a stated desire to encourage other landforces to participate in the well-organized Central training sessions and to organize similar trainings for their own people.

While officers and non-commissioned members generally follow different training tracks during their career, all of the "softer" or people-related courses available to Canadian CIMIC trainees include both officers and noncommissioned officers in the training sessions<sup>7</sup>. The CIMIC training course is generally not available to NCMs under the rank of Sergeant, and the drivers in the schematic would be lower-ranking soldiers who do not receive any CIMIC training.

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<sup>7</sup> One senior officer stated that there are a few international NATO CIMIC courses which only available to officers, but that NATO is European and American dominated and they take the "class" distinctions more seriously than Canadians.

## Four

### Methodology

#### DATA COLLECTION

Most of the data for this research were acquired while taking part as a participant-observer in the CF44E Civil-Military Cooperation Tactical Operator's training session developed by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre and organized and managed by the Canadian Forces Peace Support Training Centre at the Canadian Forces base in Kingston, Ontario from February 28 to March 11, 2005. An international version of the course, which typically included 25 to 30% civilians, had been coordinated by the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre for a number of years, but this particular version of the course was strictly for Canadian officers and noncommissioned officers. It was the first time that it was given strictly for Canadians at a Canadian military base, and my inclusion in the course was the first time a civilian was permitted to take part in a Canadian Forces (CF) training of on a Canadian Forces base. Since this course was a CF training session for military members, regular military training procedure was followed and all participants other than me were in military uniform. I took part in the training as a regular participant, and was like other participants, including receiving a final "course report" stating that I had successfully completed the instruction objectives for the CF44E Tactical Course 0501 and that I was ready for employment/deployment as a CIMIC Tactical Operator.

The course was an intensive twelve-day residential training session in which all trainees lived on the base in shared quarters and spent the majority of the twelve days as a group. The course was a combination of forty-minute lectures, small group discussion and "exercises" which included small and more extensive role-play scenarios. Substantial background reading material and daily preparation work was required, and participants

were expected to keep up with the assigned readings. Informally led discussions occurred within the context of assigned ten person "contingents", while role-plays and practical exercises included varying numbers of different participants from the larger group of thirty-nine.

The majority of the 39 participants taking part in the training session were male, with only four women (including me) taking part. The men and women were housed in separate living quarters on the base. The men stayed in various "shacks" or living quarters, usually two occupants to a dormitory-style room. The women shared space in a separate dormitory. In all cases, the washrooms were shared with others in the dorm. The floor that the women shared had a temporary sign which stated "Females on this floor".

Course participants ate all meals together in the base's Sergeants and Warrant Officers mess hall and were encouraged to socialize in the evenings. The weekend in the middle of the course was considered free time, although a number of participants chose to work on their various assignments and scenarios on Sunday. The Peace Support Training Centre was a free-standing building in the Kingston base and all the lectures and discussion took place within the Centre. Some of the role-plays and training scenarios took part in the larger base itself and even in the town of Kingston. The residences and mess halls were situated in the base and during this time period there were other Canadian Forces members taking part in the daily activities of the base. As one would expect, much of the information and insights gathered are a result of informal conversations, socialization over meals and drinks and during breaks in the course training material.

In conjunction with the participant-observer data collection, I conducted semi-structured interviews with seven course participants and several non-participating Canadian Forces personnel who were situated on the base during the same time period. These individuals were chosen on the basis of their availability and willingness to be

interviewed and were comprised of three lieutenants, one master corporal, two captains, and one major. Although only one of these individuals is presently a noncommissioned member, two of the captains were very recently promoted from the noncommissioned ranks and I believe adequately represented the NCO viewpoints. The project manager of the CIMIC course was interviewed for one hour in the week prior to the start of the course and was available for informal questions and conversation during the course itself. A few non-course participants were informally interviewed during the course of the training, including a Swiss army major who was one of the course leaders, and two CF officers who were willing to share their perceptions of the differences between reservists and regular army personnel.

Additionally, two voluntary questionnaires were distributed to the participants of the course: a pre-course questionnaire requesting basic information about the informants such as age, sex, level of education, length of service, rank, identity with an ethnic group; and a post-training questionnaire which related to the participants' reactions to the course itself. The pre-course survey was distributed at the end of the first day of the training and the post-course survey was distributed on the second last day of the training. The response rate for the pre-course questionnaire was 68%, including 14 officers and 12 NCOs, while 50% (11 officers and 8 NCOs) of the participants responded to the post-training survey. See Appendix C for questionnaires and interview schedules.

I received written permission to observe and interview participants during the course and informed consent in writing was obtained from all participants who agreed to be interviewed. All of the quotes are from notes taken during the 12 day training session, unless otherwise indicated. When known, the rank of the individual is given, but in some cases, for example, in lecture discussions or when in social gatherings without uniform, I was not aware of the individual's rank. In order to guarantee anonymity, I have chosen to



use the masculine pronoun for all participants and I will identify the two Master Corporals as Sergeant, since both of them were women and therefore easily identifiable.

Information was also gathered from informal and semistructured interviews with previous and current Canadian CIMIC officers between May 2003 and January 2006, and from attending a three day Civil-Military Coordination Training at Canadian Forces Base Trenton from January 21 to 23, 2006. These interviews produced key background information on the Canadian Forces, civil-military cooperation in general, and Canadian CIMIC in particular.

## METHODOLOGY RATIONALE

This research is based on qualitative methodology incorporating several techniques, most notably participant observation, informal and semistructured interviews and surveys. The fact that the CIMIC training session was only twelve days long meant that the research methods were limited to working within this time constraint. Bernard states that while most basic anthropological research takes a year or more of fieldwork and participant observation is generally considered a long-term process, it is possible to do useful participant observation in a matter of weeks (2002: 329). These circumstances include knowing the native language and working with a subculture within the broader context of one's own culture. While taking part in a twelve day training session is very short-term, it took place within the context of a Canadian culture and of living and working with Canadians who spoke the same language.

Bernard notes several reasons why participant observation is a valuable and valid method of research, and each of these observations were applicable in this situation:

- 1) Participant observation opens up doors which are closed to researchers using other methods of quantitative research. In the process of becoming part of the community, the researcher is allowed access to events and activities which are not open to 'outsiders'.

- 2) As the presence of the researcher becomes normalized, the problems of 'reactivity'- where people change their behaviour as a result of being observed - lessens.
- 3) As one learns more about the culture, participant observation allows the researcher to ask questions which make sense.
- 4) Participant observation gives one the insider knowledge needed to make valid statements based on both qualitative and quantitative data (Ibid: 334).

Bernard also describes the benefits of simply 'hanging out' with people and getting to know them in a non-obtrusive way. This allows the researcher to build trust and rapport and to eventually obtain more useful information than direct questioning will yield (Ibid: 347). Although an outsider to the military culture, the act of taking the course, sharing living quarters and meals, and socializing during free-time allowed me to become part of a diverse group of individuals which comprised "the class". These conversations, or what Bernard calls "informal interviews", are a key component of participant-observation and are an important way of building rapport with the participants and learning more about the group. The "observer" status was particularly obvious since, although I was a participant in the course, I was the only person not wearing a military uniform, and was one of only four women. However, since the number of course participants was fairly small and since virtually every moment of the day was spent either as a complete group or in small groups, I became personally acquainted with many individuals and was made to feel accepted into the community. While most people were open to talking to me and answering any questions I had, several individuals went out of their way to clarify military concepts, terminology and especially to initiate me into the way "things are done" in the military.

The analysis of these data was based on a qualitative, inductive approach, which implies an exploratory research process. The main themes that arose as a result of this research were identified through a grounded-theory approach, a research approach in

which analysis of the information gathered produces potential themes which may or may not be linked together. Extensive notes were taken during the twelve-day training session and upon closer analysis a number of themes were discerned and the notes were "coded" for these themes. Some themes, such as the role of rank, were not unexpected, while others, such as how the participants' viewed themselves as reservists, were unanticipated. Information about each of the themes was then compiled and analysed, first separately and then in relation to the other themes. As Winslow notes, "One observes/interviews, induces generalizations and through a process of analytical induction, attempts to develop a full-blown analysis that reflects adequately the observed reality" (1997: 2). I will supplement the analysis with quotes derived from my notes and with examples from the interviews.

## CONSTRAINTS

The fact that I was one of only four women out of thirty-nine classmates, and the only participant who was not wearing a Canadian Forces uniform, made it particularly obvious that I was not "one of them". I received different viewpoints on my effect on the group in terms of validity and reactivity, with one individual stating unequivocally that my presence made the participants act more "civilian" while others did not think my presence had much of an effect. I doubt that I had very much effect on the larger group interactions mainly because I was only one of over forty people (39 students as well as several instructors) and the focus of any interactions was on the speaker. Meals and evening social gatherings at the bar became progressively more relaxed during the twelve-day time period and especially when liquor was involved, individuals appeared to lose any inhibitions they might have had about being honest in the presence of a researcher. The fact that participants wore civilian dress in social situations helped to normalize my presence as a civilian.

As is common in many social situations, I did notice a "modelling" effect, in that individuals who were talking to me tended to moderate their use of profanity and speak in more measured tones compared to times when they were talking with their "buddies". While my presence may have made the most difference in the small group interactions, I felt that as I became familiar with my ten person contingent, I was privy to the most honest reactions from these individuals. After the training session I asked a member of my contingent whether my presence had made a difference in the discussions and he thought that perhaps it did initially, but that soon I became "almost one of the guys" and it probably did not make much of a difference.

While I feel that being a civilian had more of an effect than being a woman, there were probably some differences in response because I was a woman. While being a woman probably opened up some doors in terms of social interaction and as one participant joked "everyone wants to sit beside the girl", the responses may have been mitigated by the desire to impress me and give the "right answer", whatever that might be.

I noticed that as I became "one of the guys", I experienced some difficulty in maintaining sufficient distance as a researcher and over time became more of a "participant" than an "observer", especially in the small group projects. This was beneficial because I believe that I would not have achieved the level of honesty and trust in our interactions if my co-trainees had not intuited that I was committed to the training, however, I did experience some frustration as a result. In a few interactions I felt that my actions would influence the natural course of the interplay between the other participants if I reacted in my normal way and I found it necessary to consciously remain silent. There was one particular project in which I would have liked to become more involved by organizing the group in more cooperative ways, but I felt that this action would unduly influence the outcome. As it happens, this particular event yielded rich data on the role of

hierarchy and rank in small group situations and although it was incredibly frustrating to see "my group" flounder, I was glad of the opportunity to be part of, and observe the behaviour of the group.

## Five

### Research Participants

#### OVERVIEW

The CF44E Civil-Military Cooperation: Tactical Operator's Course is primarily aimed at Canadian Forces officers and senior non-commissioned officers, but is open to officers and senior non-commissioned officers from associated countries. There were 38 participants in the course - 36 Canadian Forces reserve personnel and two American regular military members.

The course participants were almost equally divided between noncommissioned members and officers, with 18 (47%) noncommissioned officers and 20 (53%) officers. Out of 38 participants, three (or 8%) were women, two of whom were the most junior members - Master Corporals, one of whom was a Lieutenant. Ranks ranged from the lowest noncommissioned officer rank of Master Corporal to the officer rank of Major. I was told that it was somewhat unusual for Master Corporals to be included, since trainings such as this are generally only available to individuals with a rank of Sergeant or higher. It is not clear whether they were singled out because they were women (as a way of increasing female participation) or because both were very close to being promoted to sergeant. When questioned, organizers stated that these individuals were not given special treatment because they were women, and that there was no affirmative action being taken to recruit women. However, at least three people then continued to tell me their concerns about the lack of women in CIMIC, and the need to increase the ratio of women. There was some permeability between the ranks, with several of the officers in the training session having recently been promoted from the NCO ranks. It is possible

for a senior NCO, usually with a rank of Master Warrant Officer, to directly switch to an officer rank, usually a rank of Captain, upon the recommendation of his commanding officer. A junior NCO who is working towards his/her degree will begin officer training at the lowest level of officer cadet, while a junior NCO with a university degree may begin training at the level of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.

The most common ranks were Sergeant (9), and Captain (8), with the majority of participants (29 out of 38, or 76%) coming from the junior commissioned and noncommissioned officers ranks: Master Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant or Captain.

Lieutenant (N)	Lieutenant	Captain	Major
4	6	8	2

*Table 1: Officer Ranks*

Master Corporal	Sergeant	Warrant Officer	Master Warrant Officer	Chief Warrant Officer
2	9	3	3	1

*Table 2: Noncommissioned Officer Ranks*

The participants were relatively evenly distributed from across Canada, with representation from all four Land Force Commands.

Western Canada	Central (Ontario)	Quebec	Eastern Canada
9	14	7	6

*Table 3: Landforces (geographic)*

The following overview of participants is taken from the pre-training questionnaire distributed the first day of the course, and to which 26 or 68% of the

participants responded. From my own personal observations, it would appear that the survey results are relatively indicative of the course participants. The percentage of officers to non-officers is similar for this sample as for the total group sample: 53% officers for total group sample, and 54% for smaller group sample.

	20 to 29 years	30 to 39 years	40 + years	Total
Officers	2	7	5	14
Noncommissioned	2	6	4	12
TOTAL	4	13	9	26

*Table 4: Age of Participants*

The youngest participant was twenty-three, the oldest was fifty-three and the average age was thirty-four, with 50% (13/26) being between 30 and 40 years old. There was no appreciable difference in average age between the officers and noncommissioned officers.

	0 to 9 years	10 to 19 years	20 + years	Total
Officers	5	3	6	14
Noncommissioned	2	6	4	12
TOTAL	7	9	10	26

*Table 5: Years of Military Service*

The participants had been in the military for an average of 16.5 years with the shortest length of service being 5 years and the longest being 38 years. The sample size is small, but the data suggests that there was no significant difference between the officers and noncommissioned officers.



	High School or Some College/University	University Degree
Officers	5	9
Noncommissioned	12	0

*Table 6: Education Levels*

Eighty-six percent of the officers had some university or college or higher, and sixty-four percent had at least an undergraduate degree. Most of the NCOs (80%) had some university or college/technical school but none had an undergraduate degree or higher.

Most of the participants were reservists who had civilian jobs. In the officer category, the following occupations were mentioned: computers, writer/computers, government worker (two), police officer (two), retired teacher, student, aerospace, geophysicist, project management, regular naval officer. The NCOs' occupations included: police officer (three), student, property manager, draftsman, construction, mechanic, correctional officer, U.S. regular forces and full-time reservist (two). There is a clear difference in the type of civilian careers which the NCOs and the officers have chosen: seven out of twelve (59%) of the NCOs were employed in traditionally male-dominated enforcement fields such as police enforcement (three), full-time reserves (two), regular military forces (one) or corrections (one). The officer category was considerably more diverse, with four out of fourteen (28%) of the officers employed in these fields. This is still likely higher than average, but a significantly lower percentage than the NCOs. There is a link between enforcement careers and involvement in the military as a reservist. It is unclear, though, whether individuals were predisposed to these type of careers and hence attracted to the military, or whether their military experience led them to a similar civilian career.

Virtually all of the seven individuals who were interviewed in more depth stated that they joined the reserves at a very early age, some even before they were finished high school, and therefore they were in the military before they even had full-time jobs. One can see from the tables above that the average age of participants was 34 years of age, and the average length of service was 16 years, illustrating the early age of entry into the military. Sixteen or 62 % of the participants joined the military while still teenagers, and all of the NCOs joined before they turned 25.

Age at entry	16 to 19 years	20 to 25 years	Over 25 years	Total
Officers	9	2	3	14
Noncommissioned	7	5	0	12
TOTAL	16	7	3	26

*Table 7: Age upon joining the military*

Only ten individuals (five officers and five NCOs) were married, while thirteen were single and three were divorced or separated. To speculate on the reason for this low percentage of married people - 38% - is beyond the scope of this research, but it may indicate the difficulty of maintaining a civilian career and a military career concurrently, especially for those who wish to take part in overseas assignments.

## RESERVISTS

It is generally perceived by both participants and individuals in the regular military that reserve forces tend to be better educated and therefore they have a different perspective because of educational background, although some individuals were quick to point out that these attributes do not necessarily make them better soldiers:

*A reservist might be more likely to "think outside the box". However, this could be a problem - you don't want to get into a debate (in the army). (Major, previously regular military)*

*Having more education may not make them better soldiers, but they are better able to think for themselves. (Captain, regular army)*

It is also assumed that reservists bring different skills to a mission as a result of their civilian jobs, possibly in the legal or government field or agricultural skills and that these different skill-sets are considered particularly appropriate to CIMIC.

While reservists serve in all capacities in the Canadian Forces, CIMIC and civil-military cooperation appears to be uniquely suited to individuals in the reserve forces, and the differences between regular forces and reserve forces were continuously explored in this context by course participants and organizers. Flexibility, initiative and ingenuity were mentioned numerous times as important attributes for CIMIC operators; attributes which most felt were not encouraged in the regular forces. It was felt that to be good CIMIC:

*You need to have a combination of military and civilian skills - know military but know how to interact with civilians. Regular military only know military - no normal living skills. (Captain)*

*There are differences. Reservists are civilians in uniform. They have a better understanding for how the civilian world works. Military personnel have been "bred" into the military way of life, [they] are not as flexible. (Captain)*

In addition to the variations in rank, age and experience, different classes of reservists were represented – part-time, full-time and supplementary. While reserve soldiers are generally considered part-time soldiers, or “week-end warriors”, several of the participants were working in the Canadian Forces as full-time reservists. One officer stated that the reason he maintained reserve status, in spite of receiving fifteen percent less pay than regular forces for full-time work, was because of the flexibility inherent in working as a reservist. He was able to stay in one place (geographically), he could volunteer for things that interested him, and he had more flexibility to continue with his university education. Several individuals noted that pay in the Canadian Forces is actually quite good now, and even though reservists receive less pay than regular military, the full-time reservist is still making good money. At least one in six reservists in the Canadian Forces as a whole is full-time and approximately one in eight of the participants in this particular training session were full-time reservists.

Although I do not have exact numbers, anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of the people attending the training session belonged to the supplementary reserves - previously retired regular soldiers. At least two individuals were previously regular forces who switched to the reserves. One individual in his mid-thirties had resigned from the regular army because he wanted to spend more time with his family, and another stated that he was in the reserves because he was interested in CIMIC and CIMIC is not available to those in the regular force.

Several individuals mentioned that they joined the military reserves because of a fascination with soldiers and the military since childhood:

*I played war games as a child and wanted to see how it worked in real life. I just joined the military so I could jump out of airplanes and play with guns. I'm in the reserves for*

*the fun and love of it. Regular military are there because they have no choice now.*

(Lieutenant)

*I played soldiers as a kid. Thought about regular [forces], but wanted to have the best of both worlds. (Major)*

Others joined the military and the reserves because of family tradition or peer influence.

*I've been in the reserves for thirty-eight years. It was the thing to do. When I was fifteen, my Dad took me to the armoury and that was that. (NCO turned officer)*

*Some friends were in the reserves and it seemed like a good idea but I also wanted to complete my schooling. (Lieutenant)*

It was evident during casual conversation that some simply joined because of the good wages and because of the benefits of getting some financial support for their education (reservists who go to university get 50% of their tuition paid by the military). Many of the individuals with whom I spoke had some cynicism towards the military, especially in terms of its stereotypical inefficiencies and arbitrary rules:

*Do you know how much we spent on bullets in one afternoon on the firing range?? \$17,000! (Lieutenant)*

However, the most common characteristic of this group was a discernable pride in being part of the Canadian Forces whether it was because of the camaraderie, the

teaching of discipline and responsibility in young people, or the sense of mission and pride in Canada's peacekeeping role:

*I'm proud of Canada's peacekeeping and multilateralism. I wouldn't work for the U.S. army because they are interventionist and unilateral. (Lieutenant)*

The reservists distinguish themselves from civilians and at least two individuals mentioned the tendency for soldiers to mutter "fucking civvies" when frustrated with what they perceive as incompetence or lax discipline in nonmilitary people. They were also proud to be specifically in the reserves (as opposed to the regular forces) and one individual, a high-ranking noncommissioned officer, several times described a reserve soldier as "twice the citizen" and as a "citizen soldier".

While CIMIC public relations material emphasizes the civilian skill-sets which reservists bring to CIMIC, with one exception there does not appear to be much overlap between the reservists' civilian jobs and the work that they do in the field. The exception is the preponderance of police officers in this particular cohort of trainees: five out of twenty-six respondents to the pre-training questionnaire were police officers, clearly a much higher percentage than in the regular population. A police officer's skills in dealing with dispute resolution and civilian interactions had obvious correlations with the type of civil-military interactions with which CIMIC operators must contend.

## SELECTION PROCESS

Since all CIMIC personnel are reservists, they are self-selected, in that they are all volunteers for the assignment. CIMIC public relations material implies that reservists are specifically picked for civil-military cooperation because of their useful civilian skills and because they straddle the line between military and civilian life. However, according

to this research's pre-course survey, only nine out of twenty-six participants (34%) learned about CIMIC through the military chain of command while the rest heard about it through word of mouth (34%), recruitment posters, previous deployments or other means. This implies that CIMIC personnel are not being hand-picked for their particular skills or attributes, but are present at the training more through personal interest and opportunity. As well, not all reservists are leading civilian lives, since up to 20% of reservists are full-time and therefore are basically leading military lives, at least temporarily. So a significant number of reservists, are not actually civilians who are part-time soldiers, but are individuals who have been, or are, immersed in military culture and life.

Individuals were interested in CIMIC and at the CIMIC training session for various reasons. Some were there because they had some knowledge of CIMIC and were interested in the people-oriented aspects of the work. They wanted to meet people, have face-to-face interaction and to be able to see an effect of the work that they do:

*I love the infantry, but not I'm not totally insensitive. I like working with people.*  
(Sergeant)

Others were very pragmatic about their reasons for being involved in CIMIC. One individual, who had no interest in taking part in an overseas mission and would probably never deploy as "CIMIC", simply wanted the extra training for personal reasons:

*I don't want to stagnate. I want the qualification. It's good training for my civilian job, and ... the military pays for it.* (Lieutenant)

Some felt that most military training was geared towards a traditional war which would never be fought and taught them skills that they would likely never use. They felt that CIMIC was a way in which newly learned skills would actually be used.

*It's frustrating to train for something you can't use. (Sergeant)*

In addition to wanting to train for something he might actually use, another participant looked at CIMIC within the broader context of the role and future of the Canadian:

*I'm proud of CF's UN peacekeeping and multilateralism and I think that CIMIC is the way of the future. There won't be tanks/small wars anymore. (Lieutenant)*

At least three people mentioned that since it was not easy for a reservist to gain overseas experience, and that CIMIC was a vehicle for going overseas:

*CIMIC is a guaranteed tour, especially for officer. (Lieutenant)*

A young NCO felt that some of the older participants were there not because they were good candidates or particularly interested in CIMIC, but simply because they were getting too old for regular missions. He was somewhat contemptuous of some of these people because he felt they were too old, not able to follow the discussions, were in bad physical shape and were simply at the training so they could go on tour:

*They should be saying something in the syndicates, but they don't, they are barely following the discussion. They also should have to have had minimal physical fitness levels in order to be able to go on tour. (Sergeant)*



There were numerous other comments from individuals on the inclusion of older reservists in the training session and one captain felt that the older men were simply creating jobs for themselves, that they had "big egos". There may have been some validity in their comments since one older officer mentioned that one of the reasons (among others) he was interested in CIMIC was because he was "getting too old to lead platoons". Another older individual said he had retired as a high-ranking NCO, but was encouraged to come back as an officer and take part in CIMIC, which allowed him to stay in the army. He was not really clear about CIMIC and CIMIC's purpose but he was willing to learn more about it.

## CONCLUSION

Most of the soldiers in this training session, even though reservists, are strongly committed to the military; they joined at a very young age, many are not married, many are involved in civilian careers which are similar to the military, or they have been involved in the military for their entire adult lives. This strong commitment to the military does not imply, however, that they are all the same; there was a real diversity in terms of attitudes, demeanor and opinions. Approximately half-way through the course, while at a social gathering, I was asked if I had had any surprises yet. I stated that the main surprise for me was the diversity of people and opinions in the military; civilians tended to assume a certain military mindset, but that it is not that simple. The people at the table were noticeably pleased by this observation and nodded knowingly. When I noted that there was even someone who considered himself a peace activist, they laughed and someone commented, "There's always one in the group!" This diversity means that the commentary below must be qualified by noting that, while it is possible to describe what I saw and to analyze aspects of CIMIC, the Canadian military system and the

individuals within that system, every individual soldier has is or her own unique characteristics.

## Six

### **The CF44E CIMIC Tactical Training Course and Instructors**

The purpose of the CF44E Tactical Course is to “prepare military personnel to perform the duties of a CIMIC operator in all types of operations at the tactical level in accordance with Canadian Doctrine and best practices” (Pearson Peacekeeping Centre Course: 2004c). The CIMIC training session focused on “softer” skills not normally considered to be within a military frame of reference: negotiation and nonviolent conflict resolution, tolerance for other cultures and viewpoints, excellent communication with all facets of society (including other ranks), and the ability to express viewpoints which may challenge both traditional military structure and fellow soldiers.

Since the course is a “tactical” training course, a significant portion of the content revolved around teaching particular techniques necessary to accomplish a task, as opposed to receiving a more general education in a certain field. This type of tactical training is appropriate and necessary in order to ensure certain standards and procedures are followed in the field. However, the course also attempted to address the theoretical and more contextual aspects of civil-military work in lectures and reading materials.

The course was constructed so that the thirty-nine participants were divided into four smaller “syndicates” of nine or ten individuals. Each syndicate had a combination of officers and NCOs and the four women were separated to ensure that each group included a woman. Individuals in each of the four syndicates were seated together during the first lecture and all participants automatically returned to the designated seats at subsequent lectures. Since there were no small group discussions during the lectures, this

arrangement may have been designed to encourage group identification within the syndicates, as well as to allow for more informal and in-depth discussion in designated syndicate rooms. My group was comprised of ten people: a major, two captains, two lieutenants, a chief warrant officer, a warrant officer, U.S. staff sergeant, a sergeant and me.

Theoretical topics such as the nature of contemporary armed conflict, Canadian, UN and Allied CIMIC doctrine, the legal and political framework of military operations and the Canadian CIMIC planning process were addressed in lectures and reading materials. The more hands-on training focused primarily on interpersonal skills such as public speaking and media work, interviewing techniques, population area assessments, and especially negotiation and nonviolent conflict resolution techniques.

The first several days were mostly comprised of lectures, while the latter half of the course was taken up with role-plays and practice sessions. Approximately 40% of the course time was given to lectures, speakers and group discussions, while approximately 60% was given to exercises, practice sessions and role-play scenarios. The course culminated in the final one and half day "CIMIC Tactical Support Team Final Exercise". This exercise was a sophisticated role-play exercise in which teams of participants were assigned roles in a CIMIC operation in the fictitious country of Fontinalis. Groups of participants were assigned rooms where they were required to establish CIMIC Centres and interact with volunteer actors (mostly course instructors and Kingston residents) representing the kinds of individuals a CIMIC operator might expect to encounter while on a CIMIC mission. This exercise was meant to illustrate the complexities of civil-military interactions and to allow participants to practice the interviewing, conflict resolution and negotiation skills learned during the training session.

The CIMIC CF44E training session was aimed at officers and noncommissioned officers with a rank of sergeant or higher, which means that there were a very wide

variety of ranks, from sergeant to major. On a mission, the tasks and responsibility levels of these individuals will be very different, yet all the trainees received the same training (at least in this particular course). The extent to which all of the trainees needed the same skills and expertise was not addressed, although it was expressly stated that *anyone* might be in a situation in which they would need negotiation or conflict resolution skills because of the more flexible nature of civil-military cooperation work.

A substantial amount of course material was dedicated to educating the participants about the nonmilitary "actors" in the field, and discussing ways in which the military and civilians can work together. The name itself - civil-military cooperation or CIMIC - illustrates the centrality of this relationship to its purpose and goals. Numerous authors and individuals have attested to the strained relationship between the military and some civilian agencies, in particular, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the need to rectify the situation. While there many civilian actors are involved in a conflict or post-conflict situation, including International Organizations (IOs), Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs), media, regional organizations and local civil authorities and local people, a significant amount of the course material and discussion centred on NGOs.

Since CIMIC is a relatively new concept and institution within the Canadian military, an important aim of the course was to help the participants understand CIMIC's role and purpose in the Canadian Forces. Initially there was a broad range of knowledge and attitudes about the role of CIMIC within the Canadian Forces and a few, notably some of the NCOs, had virtually no understanding of what CIMIC meant and what it entailed. A sergeant said that he had absolutely no idea what CIMIC was, and in fact had thought that CIMIC was simply intelligence-gathering - a perception that was strenuously denied by all instructors and organizers. Another senior NCO who had heard about CIMIC while he was on an overseas tour, had no idea of the purpose of CIMIC or the tasks of a CIMIC operator. Others had extensive knowledge of CIMIC, either through

personal experience, or through reading and research. One captain (who had an advanced degree in sociology) had gained access to and read through most of the course reading material prior to the course and it was clear from his questions and comments that he had a much more nuanced understanding of the issues than most of the participants.

The most common perception, at least initially, was that CIMIC was all about "projects" and "handing out teddy bears", a perception that the course organizers took great pains to dispel, but which recurred time and time again, and one which I encountered even before beginning the training session. As I was flying into Kingston I heard someone on the plane respond to his seatmate's question of why he was flying to Kingston:

*I'm going to Kingston to take part in a course called CIMIC." Seatmate: "What is that?"*

*Participant: "It's when you do reconstruction, like building schools and hospitals and stuff. I'm not really sure, but its things like building schools. Yeah, we'll see. Should be fun. (Lieutenant)*

Most looked at the short-term, on the ground, implications of having the Canadian Forces in a conflict or post-conflict situation and tended to view CIMIC in this capacity.

*CIMIC is projects, schools, wells. Organize jobs. (NCO turned Captain)*

*Deals with public relations, communications, hearts and minds - here's a teddy bear etc. (Major)*

A very few, mostly well-educated officers, looked beyond the immediate projects aspect and considered the importance and role of CIMIC more within the context of the

overarching role of the Canadian military and the geopolitical situations the military finds itself:

*With asymmetric threats, armies are becoming more like police forces, complex emergencies are more complicated. Civil-military cooperation is the direction armed forces are going (Lieutenant).*

The word “teddy-bears” became code for all the warm and fuzzy aspects of CIMIC from which some of the soldiers tried to distance themselves from, and which some instructors tried to discourage. Examples were given of instances where the soldiers’ personal feelings of sympathy and pity caused them to organize shipments of “aid”, which were both useless and at times culturally inappropriate. The “teddy-bear” code came from the most famous (or infamous) example of soldiers organizing a container full of teddy bears to be sent to Afghanistan, where children needed food, not teddy bears, and where bears represented an oppressive regime (Russia). The potency of this “symbol” was humourously displayed during a media roleplay when an officer was describing to the “reporter” the purpose of CIMIC. After describing what he considered the main role of CIMIC, he stated:

*Teddy bears come and go but we stay on the ground. (Captain)*

There was a period of course evaluation at the end of the course in which the course director asked for verbal feedback from the small groups. Some of the suggestions for course improvement were thoughtful and well-considered, including: bring in the actual drivers (low-ranking NCMs) who would be working with the CIMIC operators in the field to take part in the role-plays so they can learn more about CIMIC; having actual performance tests during the training; and *especially* including more hands-on skills,

especially mediation, conflict resolution and work with translators. A number of individuals, both during the course and during the evaluation session, mentioned the idea of having pre-reading packages and threshold knowledge tests which participants must pass prior to taking part in the course - apparently a process used in other CF trainings. This was considered an excellent way of including the theoretical material while still concentrating on the more practical skills during the training itself. It was clear from this evaluation session that some individuals took the CIMIC course seriously and wanted the best training possible, while others did not have the same level of commitment. While the majority of participants showed some interest in the final discussion and a few were keenly interested, a minority appeared bored and uninterested.

The choice of instructors was instrumental in shaping how participants perceived CIMIC and CIMIC-related tasks. The instructors were earnest about teaching this new way called CIMIC, and although some of the dinner-time conversations tended towards more regular military conversation, I believe that the tone of the whole training session was mitigated by the non-militaristic tone of the instruction. Most of the instructors were military personnel (mostly senior officers but a few senior NCOs) with either experience in specific skills such as negotiation skills or interviewing techniques, or field experience in civil-military cooperation. However, there were significant contributions from civilians with expertise in the various aspects of civil-military interactions in the field. For example, a humanitarian aid worker with expertise in complex emergency situations was involved in the course for the entire twelve days, taking part in small group work and giving lectures on non-governmental organizations and cross-cultural communication. This individual worked with Medecins Sans Frontieres, well-known for its stance on neutrality and refusal to work with the military. Response to this woman was polite but varied. A few obviously disagreed with some of her organization's views, but most appeared to respect her views and those of her organization.



Some of the instructors were Canadian Forces personnel who had taken part in at least one six-month CIMIC rotation in various countries, including Bosnia, Congo and Afghanistan. The trainees were particularly attentive and respectful to these instructors because of their experience. These individuals' real-life experiences and stories exerted far more influence on the trainees perceptions than any amount of background reading or theory, and significantly most of these stories revolved around the "softer" aspects of CIMIC work, such as helping individuals and communities in need (as opposed to the military objectives of CIMIC). It was clear from the attention and respect accorded individuals with CIMIC field experience that they were considered leaders, irrespective of their actual rank. The emphasis that the speakers placed on the softer people-skills needed for civil-military cooperation helped shape the participants' perceptions of what skills they themselves needed to be effective CIMIC operators.

## **Seven**

### **Observations during the CIMIC training course**

The following observations and commentary are divided into sections correlating to the main components of the CIMIC course structure: readings, lectures, and group exercises. There is an additional section relating to the day-to-day informal social interactions between participants.

#### **REACTIONS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TO READINGS**

The course reading material covered a wide variety of topics, from more general articles such as "Understanding Conflict and Peace", "An Introduction to Non-Governmental Organizations" to more specifics such as "Negotiation Theory meets Practice", "Who is a Refugee?", "Working with Interpreters" to very practical readings about the logistics of CIMIC management. Substantial readings were assigned for each evening and since the theoretical portion of the course was extensive, an individual would need to spend at least two hours an evening in order to properly read and digest the daily background reading.

Many of the readings were demanding and all of the participants may not have had the patience and ability to comprehend the material. Some of the readings, for example, the assigned reading for the component on cross-cultural issues, were impressive in scope and portrayed an in-depth analysis of the issues, but unfortunately I would question whether it was read and understood by participants. This particular topic

was discussed on the first day of the course and since the readings were meant to be completed the night before the discussion, many, if not most, participants had not actually completed this assigned reading. I personally did not read this particular article until after the course was finished, and only did so because I was writing about the course.

Many of the NCOs in particular showed little interest in the more detailed theoretical aspects of the course material. Some were frustrated by the large amount of reading material and felt that the background material would be forgotten anyway so there was no point in reading it. One sergeant said that it was too much "like school", not a military training. At least two officers interviewed felt that a number of the participants had trouble understanding the material.

*Some CIMIC stuff is way outside military norms - university level. (Major)*

While most of the officers had at least an undergraduate degree, none of the NCOs who completed the pre-training questionnaire had an undergraduate degree, and there were observable differences both through anecdotal evidence and through the questionnaire results in terms of completing the required readings. According to the post-course survey, only 14 out of 19 participants (74%) (81% of officers and 62% of NCOs) completed 75% or more of the readings and two individuals (1 officer, 1 NCO) completed none of them. Further, only half of the course participants completed the post-course survey and the participants probably over-estimated the amount of completed readings since conversations with participants and observation of evening activities indicated that an even higher percentage of the course participants did not complete some or most of the course readings.

Both survey results and conversations with participants illustrated a wide range of interest and participation in the course material. As one participant noted, "Some people come to these [military] training sessions to party, others take them very seriously." Those who came to party could not possibly have completed the required readings in the time allotted.

## REACTIONS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TO LECTURES

The lectures were comprehensive in scope and covered a wide variety of CIMIC-related topics from complex theoretical concepts such as the "legal framework of military operations" to more anecdotal, personal story-telling. Lecturers summarized the reading material, provided new theoretical information and spoke of personal experience in the field.

The lecturers generally saved at least a small amount of time for questions, but the majority of participants did not engage in classroom discussions. The participants who were involved in lecture discussions tended to be the same five or six people - usually officers. However, anecdotal stories based on personal experience were clearly of more interest to the entire group, and in these cases the class appeared to be more engaged. Class participants were always polite and appeared to be attentive, but a senior officer joked with me after the training session, noting that while the participants *seemed* to be paying attention during the classroom presentations, they were *ordered* to pay attention, and it did not actually mean that they were learning anything. Virtually no one took notes during the lectures, even though some of the lecture material was quite detailed, and while some of the powerpoint presentation material was distributed, much of the material was not.

The more academic lectures tended to be the least popular component of the course and numerous comments about the desire for more practical CIMIC training and less theory were made:

*I'm a bit disappointed that we don't talk more about CIMIC, on the ground we'll forget this background stuff.* (Sergeant)

One individual felt that the more academic aspects of the course just gave a few people the chance to show off their knowledge and that there was no need to provide as much political and background material.

*I don't know why we have to have so much political stuff anyway. People who talk in class are blowhards and just want to show off how much they know.* (Sergeant)

Discipline is a key military value. While I noticed this to be manifested in various ways, one of the most obvious was the adherence to precise time reckonings. Firstly, things moved quickly; people in the military eat fast, move fast and change focus quickly. Secondly, although they did not appear to be paying attention to the clock, everyone was prompt and efficient. If an instructor told the group to take a ten minute break, after nine minutes people might be standing around outside of the classroom drinking coffee, but suddenly at 9 ½ minutes, everyone quickly returned to the classroom.

This preoccupation with time, and the speed with which it was inculcated into me was illustrated when, several days into the course, a participant entered the classroom a few seconds after the speaker had started and I was so shocked by this that I commented on it to my seat-mate. He was surprised as well, particularly when we saw that it was the U.S. Major (he was generally more "military" than some of the other participants). My

seat-mate assumed that there must have been a very good reason for his tardiness, otherwise it would never have happened.

### *Rank and Hierarchy*

The trainees were specifically informed on the first day of the course that all participants were to use first names and that "rank has no place here". The primary reason given by lecturers for this practice was the need for CIMIC operators to learn to communicate effectively with all individuals regardless of their rank, and apparently, keeping the participants in uniform kept them aware of their status relative to the other individuals with whom they would be working.

The trainees were explicitly (but anecdotally, not through written course material) taught ways to circumvent, or use, the hierarchical system to achieve their own objectives. They were told that sometimes what they felt was the best course of action needed to be justified militarily even if it was not a military task; they were given hints on the best way to approach or communicate with the commander in order to get a project approved. Additionally, they were assured that, because of their special status as liaison between the civilians and the military, they would often have knowledge which was inaccessible to the traditional military and they would need to use this knowledge to influence their commanding officer even if it would not normally be their place in the hierarchy to do so. For example, it was explicitly suggested that they use the word "should" rather than "must" when giving advice on courses of action. Again, it was proposed that when working with other unfamiliar militaries and unsure of the rank of the person with whom one is dealing, it was prudent to assume a higher rank, in order to avoid insulting a high-ranking officer. Another reason given for wearing uniforms during the training was that CIMIC personnel would be wearing uniforms while in the field, and needed to realize that civilians respond differently to soldiers in uniform than to civilians.

This was applicable in the training situation because the major role-play scenario involved interviewing civilians in the town of Kingston.

### *Civil-Military Cooperation*

An important and much emphasized part of the CIMIC training was to educate military personnel about the needs, ethos and organizational culture of civilian organizations, in particular nongovernmental organizations. The lecture material emphasized various aspects of the differences between NGOs and the military, especially focusing on different organization cultures, the need to respect most NGOs commitment to neutrality and impartiality, and different attitudes toward the use of weapons and military security in relief and development work. The difference between a horizontal or "flat" organizational culture and the military's vertical hierarchy was described and discussed especially in terms of decision-making processes. Lecturers especially emphasized that the military should "never, ever take command of a civil organization" and that the relationship with NGOs might depend on the size and scope of the organizations. One should *cooperate* with larger organizations but it might be possible to help *coordinate* smaller organizations, since the military might have a bigger picture of the on-the-ground situation. A significant component of these discussions was dedicated to brainstorming ways in which the military and NGOs could work together effectively.

Lecturers tended to be quite positive about NGOs and emphasized their knowledge of issues on the ground, the fact that they had very difficult and dangerous jobs with little pay, and their longevity on the ground, as compared to the brief six month rotations of CIMIC personnel. Reactions to these topics were varied, ranging from

indepth knowledge and understanding of NGOs to obvious incomprehension of, and even frustration with, a nonmilitary mindset. There was a general perception of aid workers as inefficient and disorganized, and one participant described his opinion of a mindset that was the complete opposite of the military pragmatism to which he was accustomed:

*NGOs are sort of wishy-washy do-gooders. [They have] problems with indecisiveness, dreaming of a perfect world. (Class Discussion)*

Participants were not just cynical about the civilian organizations, however. During a private conversation, a senior NCO who had portrayed a very military bearing and who did not speak at all in lecture discussions, confided to me that he felt that the military was extremely inefficient and the money spent on the military in these situations would be much better spent if given to the NGOs who "knew what they were doing." This individual professed a real admiration for the work of NGOs and other participants, particularly those who had worked in the field with relief and development workers, displayed considerable knowledge and respect for them:

*[They] have more guts than us - make moral choices, a very difficult job. They've got a lot of guts. [They] don't get a lot of cash. (Sergeant)*

However, this same individual stated a number of times that he did not want CIMIC to be portrayed as "a bunch of treehuggers sitting around singing fucking Kumbaya" and took pains to always distinguish CIMIC from "NGOs wearing green". "Sitting around singing fucking kumbaya" was - or became - a joking catchphrase during the duration of the training session to describe idealistic aid workers. There was also



some annoyance in the fact that while the military tried to understand NGOs, the same does not hold true for the NGOs:

*There is very little knowledge of CIMIC in the NGOs. All military tends to look alike - battlegroup, PRT, CIMIC. (Captain)*

*NGOs should understand soldiers just like soldiers should understand NGOs. (Sergeant)*

A few of the lower-ranking NCOs displayed some frustration at the time spent discussing NGOs and did not understand why it was necessary to concentrate so much lecture time on these organizations. These concerns were always expressed in the context of casual conversation, never to an instructor or during the lectures.

A few of the more knowledgeable participants felt that communication is getting better between NGOs and the military. Certainly the tone of the discussions was not overtly hostile to the organizations, in spite of some frustrations and lack of comprehension on certain issues.

Cross-cultural communication was specifically addressed as an important aspect of CIMIC and there was an excellent and comprehensive lecture on intercultural issues such as: definition of culture, the iceberg model of culture, dimensions of diversity, difference layers of culture, intercultural communication, and culture shock. There was relatively more class participation on this particular topic, with participants giving examples from their own experiences. An officer described a situation detailing his extreme discomfort when a man held his hand as they were walking through the camp. Many in the room laughed and reacted somewhat disbelievingly to this example, as if it was inconceivable that this actually happened. Clearly, appropriate heterosexual male

behaviour is of vital importance to the group, and behaviour which hints of homosexuality in their own cultural context was extremely discomforting to them<sup>8</sup>.

While this particular lecture covered many relevant cultural issues, was well-presented, and was clearly considered an important part of the course, it was only 40 minutes long. However, the issues of cultural appropriateness and working with other cultures were discussed at various times throughout the course, especially regarding the role of women. It was emphasized that the need to have a female CIMIC team member was of particular importance, since the CFs are heavily involved in Muslim countries such as Afghanistan where it would be inappropriate for a male CIMIC officer to speak to women without another woman present. The participants, in both their attitudes and comments, showed respect for the cultures in which these differences occurred, and I was struck by the neutrality and respect displayed when past conflicts were discussed. The importance of remaining neutral was mentioned numerous times during the course lectures, as well as the need to respect all nationalities and the desirability of learning at least some of the language. There were at least a few attempts at coming to terms with cultural and ethical relativity, and some lecturers and participants displayed an informed understanding of poverty:

*You need to have an understanding of poverty. For example, if swing sets are used for firewood, it is understandable. And it's understandable that things go missing if you're hungry, things disappear in Canada too. Don't just do feel-good projects - swings have low priority. (Captain who had taken part in a CIMIC rotation in Bosnia)*

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<sup>8</sup> A great deal of the humour used in the lectures related in some way to (latent) homosexuality or "kick in the crotch" type of jokes, which were considered extremely funny by the participants.

A film was shown in which there was a scenario which illustrated how *not* to do a negotiation/interview. Participants were quick to pick up the obvious mistakes, especially relating to patronizing attitudes and lack of cultural awareness and the use of intimidation techniques. One of the participants noted that the commander should not have chosen that individual to do the job – “he wasn’t suitable”, alluding to the often expressed view that some individuals simply did not have the personality to do the type of tasks which were asked of CIMIC personnel.

Many in the training session were well aware of the more sentimental “feel-good” aspects of working with relief and development organizations and while some were somewhat contemptuous of this aspect, as noted above, others were attracted to CIMIC because of this component. They were also cognizant of the difficulty of maintaining distance from the civilians they worked with and specifically questioned this difficulty in class. The instructor responded by stating that this was a legitimate issue, but it was simply stated as a fact, not as a problem which must be addressed:

*CIMIC people have a tendency to go native. Two CIMIC operators came home, left the (military) reserves, and went back to work with NGOs. (Speaker)*

The instructors spent considerable time discussing the issue of weapons use and the reasons that some NGOs would not accept military security. This issue was particularly puzzling to some individuals initially - it did not make sense to them. A few individuals stated without reservation that they thought it was actually “stupid” to say no to military security.

Others understood the need for NGOs to stay neutral and not work with the military; they clearly were aware of different definitions of “security”:

*Honestly? I don't have problems with them. I think they have good reason not to work with military. It's totally understandable. We look like bad guys, its normal to be scared of us, they're supposed to be. (Sergeant)*

Near the end of the course, participants were given an assignment in which they researched and then "rated" various real-life nongovernmental organizations on the likelihood of whether they would work with the military. I was familiar with some though not all of the organizations presented, and it was obvious that most participants had little comprehension of the various agencies' motives and purposes and made uninformed guesses about whether they would work with the military.

#### *Nonviolent Conflict Resolution and Negotiation*

The question of whether CIMIC operators carry weapons depends on the military rules of engagement for that particular operation, although in some situations it appeared that individuals were given some discretion on whether to disarm. Participants were informed that many NGOs did not allow weapons within their organizations and that there might be times when CIMIC operators would need to disarm in order to be part of liaison meetings or to enter buildings. Participants reacted to this information in different ways. On the one hand, some individuals indicated that they would never go anywhere without their weapon and could not accept the need to leave weapons at the door for meetings.

*Some NGOs have no problem working with the military, but there is no reason for you to give up your weapon just to please them. (Sergeant)*

On the other hand, most individuals understood the effect that carrying a weapon has on civilians, and understood the need to make their weapon as unobtrusive as possible.

There were fairly detailed lectures on conflict resolution and negotiation, and while some participants were well versed in negotiation technique, others were unclear and vague about the concepts. For example, when the large group was asked what negotiation was, a sergeant, not entirely in jest, called out that it means to "Not shoot someone". The need for all CIMIC people to learn negotiation techniques was emphasized, and when a participant asked who would generally be the person who would be conducting negotiations, the presenter replied "Anyone in this room." The importance of using good listening skills during negotiations was mentioned a number of times by the lecturers, but I noticed that several participants had poor listening skills in both discussions and role-play scenarios. At times I felt as if no one was listening to me and thought that it was because I was a woman, but on two or three occasions I heard male participants say in frustration, "I *said* that but no one was listening!"

The small groups were asked to discuss the causes and sources of conflict and share them with the larger group. The answers illustrated a relatively sophisticated grasp of the causes of war: religious, ethnic, political, natural resource allocation, racial, cultural, ideological and economic inequalities. One group especially emphasized the many manifestations of power dynamics. While one instructor stated that "We (the military) tend to think of good guys and bad guys", there was very little indication of a simplistic good versus evil mindset in the class discussions. That said, after a good amount of nuanced discussion, one senior officer bluntly stated:

*These are all excuses. Humans just generally have bad behaviour and do bad thing.*  
(Major)

Participants were well aware that the military needs to use means other than violence to achieve its objectives even though the purpose of a military is the "lawful application of force". The course's focus on nonviolent conflict resolution and negotiation was one of the most obvious differences between CIMIC and a regular military approach. Course instructors explicitly addressed the issue of soldiers using nonviolent techniques:

*We are used to using force, but we can't always use force.* (Course instructor during negotiation training session)

While the participants were interested and actively engaged during the lectures on nonviolent conflict resolution and negotiation, there was a pervading cynicism regarding the use of nonviolent techniques in a conflict situation. Early in the course, a lecturer was discussing what to do in certain situations in the field. He suggested that, prior to using force, one must "try everything else, try mediation" and the entire class laughed as if he was joking.

### *Role of CIMIC*

The role of CIMIC was naturally discussed at length in the lectures, and one rather contentious issue was whether Canadian CIMIC focuses more on development-type projects or on military liaison activity. The official message, that CIMIC's ultimate purpose is to advance the commander's mission - which usually involved some sort of military liaison activity - was sometimes at odds with the speaker's experiences and stories. These experiences tended to focus on stories of somewhat autonomous community improvement projects rather than the military aspects.

Initially, by all accounts, individuals working in civil-military cooperation were focused on projects, which basically meant providing resources, financial or otherwise, to various actors *in situ* in order to implement some kind of “development” project. This project usually entailed some form of infrastructure project such as building schools, refurbishing homes, or repairing wells. Participants came to the course with preconceived notions of project work, but during the course they were cautioned to stay away from projects as much as possible, partially because of frustrations from the NGO community that tended to consider projects their mandate.

Nonetheless, fulfilling the commander’s mission and project development were not considered completely separate components of CIMIC activities, and course participants and speakers agreed that projects are a good way to increase cooperation within the community. As one experienced officer stated:

*If you don't do projects, you are not as welcome in the community. This is good force protection - if the community is happy, they are not going to shoot you. (Major)*

One participant at the training session asked if CIMIC people get too wrapped up in hearts and minds and forget about force protection. The speaker responded affirmatively by saying that while people “tend to go native, [it is acceptable because] CIMIC is increasing force protection simply by being there”.

The participants were cautioned that they might see a community need which they wanted to address, but in order to address the need they would need to justify the projects to the commander on the basis of the project’s impact on the commander’s mission and on force protection. For example, if they wanted to repair a school, they could justify it by saying it would keep the children off the streets so the troops could travel unimpeded. There was an air of subtle subterfuge when the speakers were discussing this, basically

giving away secrets on how to “fool” the commander. In a subsequent CIMIC information session (January 2006), a captain became frustrated with the vagueness of instructions regarding projects and the need to do primarily “high impact” projects, that is, highly visible projects that with the greatest potential benefit to the military. He wanted to know that he could work with projects that were clearly beneficial to the community as well:

*High impact - bullshit. I'm going to bullshit on my report so I can do it. (Captain)*

The importance of obedience within the military cannot be overstated. While some instructors emphasized the various ways in which the CIMIC operator in the field could bend the rules in order to achieve good results, others were clear that their loyalties lay with complete obedience to military orders. The stereotypical military position of “just following orders” was illustrated on more than one occasion:

*If we are talking about the moral aspects of a military decision, I would just follow orders. I am not pro-nuclear, but I would push the button if I was ordered [to do so]. (Course instructor)*

*If the commander tells me to hose down women and children, I'll do that, but if he told me to give them food, it'd be okay too. (Sergeant)*

The most clear-cut commentary on the issue of obedience tended to come from NCOs:

*We are very structured and vertical. We are not entitled to our opinions and can't express them. I can't make a decision by myself. (Sergeant)*



Ultimately, although many of the lecturers' stories focused on project activities, the organizers were clearly trying to portray CIMIC's role as supportive of the "commander's mission". The "commander's mission" was described to me in this way by a major: "The commander is the one individual who is the highest ranking officer and who will decide what everyone else will do to achieve *his* one or two sentence military mission". Thus, the "commander's mission" is short-hand for stating that all decisions must be based on the Canadian military objectives, and not necessarily on what is the best for the community with which the CIMIC operator is working. So, while the CIMIC trainees were encouraged to use all of their "on the ground" knowledge of the civilian population and the non-military groups working in the vicinity, they always needed to keep in mind that ultimately they did not have the power to make certain decisions:

*The battalion commander owns CIMIC. (Course instructor)*

*If the commander wants to impact the economy, then you study the economy, but you can advise and make suggestions. (Course instructor)*

As the course progressed, the continual talk of fulfilling the "commander's mission" and to a lesser extent the need for security or force protection eventually had an impact on the participants' perceptions of CIMIC. Participants moved beyond the project and "feel-good" aspects of CIMIC and began to better understand the military purpose of civil-military cooperation. Some who were initially rather frustrated with the emphasis on the role of NGOs and the need to work effectively with them were noticeably relieved to situate CIMIC on more familiar ground - that is, the military.

*Yes! We get so caught up in the touchy/feely NGO, NGO, here he's talking about the commander's mission. (Sergeant)*

*I am always a soldier first, CIMIC second. (Sergeant)*

Conversely, some perceived that as CIMIC personnel they needed to distance themselves from the military as well. When a lecturer asked for ideas on how to bridge the divide between the military and NGOs, one participant suggested that "We should separate CIMIC from regular forces - show them that we are volunteers". The distinctiveness of CIMIC within the military was also illustrated when an instructor stated:

*We at CIMIC need to be the ones who are culturally aware - troops are trained to fight, as is the Commanding Office. (Instructor)*

The idea that CIMIC was separate and distinct from the rest of the military was evident in more subtle ways throughout the course. There was no indication that any of the participants were offended to be considered "different".

### *Summary*

Since many of the participants had not actually completed much of the background reading material, the classroom lectures may have been their first exposure to much of the course material. Furthermore, since few participants took notes or took part in the discussion, many of the participants of them did not retain much of the excellent material that was presented. Officers in general were more interested in the lecture

material than the NCOs; this could be a combination of higher education and a greater need to understand the political and legal background ramifications of CIMIC because of their different job descriptions and tasks in the field.

The practice of having participants in uniform while at the same time encouraging the use of first names was an indication of both the importance of rank and hierarchy in the military and the delicate balance that CIMIC operators must maintain between their interactions with civilians and their interactions with the military. The fact that many participants were frustrated by this practice attests to the strength of the ranking system and the inherent difficulties in changing such a core military characteristic.

Obedience is another clearly articulated and recognized military attribute. Its manifestation was observable in the CIMIC training even while CIMIC course organizers and participants identified flexibility, creativity and initiative as important attributes for CIMIC personnel. Obedience in this context (even paying attention in class) is closely connected to the hierarchical organization of the military and its ubiquitous chain of command and adherence to rank.

Increased knowledge about civilian organizations and cultural differences is a crucial component of civil military cooperation and of the aims of the CIMIC course itself. The importance of the NGO/military relationship in particular has been a key component in all communications I have had with Canadian military personnel since I first began considering CIMIC as a possible research subject in May of 2003. If one of the purposes of the training session was to sensitize the military personnel to the needs of non-military actors, this goal seems to have been at least partially accomplished. The seven participants who were interviewed at the beginning of the session were asked to rate the importance of a number of topics and skills which were itemized in the course description, and the post-training survey asked the same questions. While a number of the answers were similar in both instances, three of the questions received very different

ratings, implying an over-all influence over the course of the training session. The three topics which received significantly higher ratings after the course as compared to at the beginning of the course were: non-military actors in military operations (officers - 8.5 during, 8.9 after, NCOs 5.7 during, 7.5 after); the needs of civilian and non-combatant populations in military operations (officer - 6.8 during, 8.0 after, NCOs - 7.0 during, 8.1 after); and Canadian CIMIC planning process (officer - 7.4 during, 8.1 after, NCOs - 5.3 during, 8.3 after). Officers initially appeared to be more aware of civilian needs, but the difference between NCO and officer response was considerably diminished by the end of the course.

Some participants came to the training session with little knowledge of negotiation and mediation theory and tended to view these issues in simplistic terms of either shooting or not shooting someone. Furthermore, while most appeared interested in these lectures, many indicated that they did not believe these to be viable alternatives, as demonstrated by the scornful laughter at the instructor's comment to use mediation first in a conflict situation. However, the level of engagement and interest in the classroom indicated a desire to learn more about these topics.

The discussions on the contentious issue of whether CIMIC is more involved in community projects or in military liaison activities exemplified the differences in attitude between more military-minded individuals and those more interested in the civilian aspects. Some NCOs in particular were more interested in the military ramifications of civil-military work while others (often officers, but not exclusively) displayed a desire to learn more about civilian organizations and community projects. Individual's attitudes did change during the training, however, and the focus on civilian organizations apparently had the desired effect of sensitizing military personnel to the needs of civilians.

## REACTIONS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TO ROLEPLAYS AND GROUP PROJECTS

"Hands-on" participatory activities were an important part of the CIMIC training session, as one would expect from a tactical operator's course. The exercises included: simple oral presentation and briefing practice sessions; practicing more complex interview and communication techniques specific to military/civilian liaison activities; taking on the roles of the various parties involved in negotiations and practicing negotiation techniques; working with interpreters; and participating in roleplays as both media interviewers and interviewees. The most extensive exercise took place over a nine-day period and incorporated various aspects of the smaller exercises. This particular exercise aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to practice the gathering of information and to respond to a situation which entailed several thousand "refugees" arriving in Kingston and needing assistance. All of the various exercises included some component of de-briefing, which gave instructors and participants a chance to analyze the activity and their own responses to the activity. The exercises were done as small groups and the de-briefing activities were not uniformly effective in the different groups. Some individuals and/or groups took these activities very seriously, while others paid little attention to the commentary.

The majority of the roleplays and group exercises involved some aspect of interpersonal communication skills useful to any individual working with people, and were not directly related to military skills, although a few of the practice sessions included giving military reports and presenting information to their commanding officers. Classic military skills such as battle-training or "mission-readiness" were not discussed, and, in fact, participants were discouraged from discussing these issues. The one time that I observed a participant ask a weapons-related question, the instructor quickly stopped him and told him "that's not why we're here".

Most of the participants were enthusiastic about the skills-based component of the course and were familiar with the general style of instruction. The results of the post-training questionnaire and individual interviews attest to the importance most participants placed on communication skills and negotiation training. When asked to rate on a scale of one to ten the importance of various topics described in the CIMIC course outline, the highest ranking topics for both officers and NCOs were communications skills (officers 9.2 and NCOs 9.6) and conflict resolution and negotiation skills (officers 9.3 and NCOs 9.5). The survey also indicated that learning other hands-on skills such as interviewing techniques, community assessments, working with interpreters and more explicit cultural awareness training were identified both as desired skills to be learned and as skills which should be emphasized more in the training course itself.

While the officers generally appeared more comfortable with the theoretical aspects of the course material, all of the participants, officers and NCOs alike, considered the hands-on interpersonal practical skills such as negotiation training, interviewing of civilians, and working with interpreters as the most crucial skills needed for the work. The NCOs generally seemed to be the most comfortable, interested and engaged when doing "exercises" such as role-plays, assessments and fictional scenarios. Participants were aware that the small amount of negotiation training given during the CIMIC training was inadequate, and both instructors and participants were frustrated with the inability of some individuals to make the switch from battle mode to negotiation mode.

As time passed, the group work became noticeably more relaxed and civilian-like; during a practice "briefing" a young officer leaned casually against a table while giving a report, prompting a supervisor to reprimand him for his informal behaviour.

The roleplays and practical exercises provided an opportunity to observe whether the trainees understood the readings and lecture material and whether they would be able

to put the theories into practice. Not surprisingly, a wide range of attitudes, skills and knowledge of CIMIC procedure were displayed during the exercises.

### *Rank and Hierarchy*

Although the participants described this training session as particularly relaxed and “unmilitary”, the impact of rank and hierarchy was clearly evident in the group projects. The following is a more detailed description of an extended project in which the usual rules of rank no longer applied, and how this impacted the effectiveness of the group process. During the second week of the course, the original contingents were given a fairly large and complicated assignment which took place over several days and which culminated in each group presenting their findings to the larger group. The over-arching project involved preparing a “Kingston area emergency response assessment” to a fictional scenario in which 5,000 refugees would be arriving in Kingston in the near future. Each small group was given a different component to assess. My group was given the task of calculating the transportation and basic food, water and sanitation needs for the incoming influx of refugees.

In our group, the youngest and most junior ranking individual (a sergeant) was given command of the project, and an older captain was placed second in command. As mentioned previously, this group was comprised of 10 people: two sergeants (a Canadian sergeant and a U.S. staff sergeant), one warrant officer, one chief warrant officer, two lieutenants, two captains and one major, and me. All of the individuals except the Canadian sergeant would be considered higher ranking officers and non-commissioned officers. The group had a difficult time getting the project started, since the young sergeant was clearly not used to taking charge of a group. While various ideas were raised, the sergeant was unable to focus the group in a way in which we could make progress. Each person was polite but noncommittal; the group seemed unable to make a

decision on where to start or how to move the project along. One individual, a lieutenant, took it upon himself - without consultation from the group, or permission from the sergeant - to leave the room and start work on a proposal at a different computer.

The most senior-ranking member of the group, a major, had been away for most of the morning on personal business. While the lieutenant was gone, the major returned, took stock of the rather confusing situation; effortlessly and almost automatically he took control of the project. The sergeant did not protest, and the entire group, which had become quite tense, noticeably relaxed when the Major took charge. The group began to make better progress on this rather complicated project. However, this was not the end of our frustrations, since the lieutenant (who had spent the better part of the day working on his own), eventually came back into the room with an almost complete action plan that had nothing to do with the work the group had done in his absence. He ignored all the work which the rest of the group had done and presented his game-plan, a plan that clearly improved on the group's plan. Most of the people appeared taken aback by his presumption, and yet were unresponsive as he blithely described his plan and took over leadership of the group. Meanwhile, various members of the group left the room and came back and seemed to be having discussions outside of the group room.

As a working member of the group, I was frustrated by this point and went out to the hallway to cool off. I ran into other members of the group who were venting to each other - but outside of the room. Inside the room, tension was high, but no one said anything to the lieutenant, or did anything to change the situation. Subsequently he went off to type up a report and conduct more research. While he was gone the rest of the group ignored all the work he had done and the major continued leading with the original plans. When the lieutenant came back in again and saw what was happening, the group ignored him and he immediately turned around and walked back out again. I asked if this was how things were done in the army - were plans changed and individuals ignored



without any discussion? Several individuals said that this was not how things were normally done, "but we're all used to being in charge". They implied that they were not sure how to work in a group in which all of them were leaders. When I asked whether maybe someone should go and speak to this individual, the major once again took charge, swore under his breath and went out to talk to him. The two of them came back and because the work that this individual had done was of excellent quality, the group agreed to go with his plan. The lieutenant made the presentation of the plan to the larger group since he understood it best, and did an admirable job of the presentation. The plan, however, was really not a group project, but was the work of one individual who had worked very hard in isolation.

When I confidentially mentioned to one of the participants (a senior NCO) that it was almost cruel and unfair to the sergeant to give the leadership to the sergeant he commented that "It would have been natural to give the leadership to the major or one of the captains, or you, but I guess they (i.e. the organizers) are trying to show what it might be like in the field". In later discussions with several members of the group, I again commented that it seemed unkind to put the young sergeant in charge, and three participants all agreed with the major's response, that "In CIMIC, we will have to deal with higher ranks, both militarily and socially and will need to give them advice because we will have the information. CIMIC people need to get used to this." While this appeared to be the general consensus, a senior NCO later commented during a subsequent discussion about the situation:

*They took away the old hierarchical system but we had nothing to replace it with.*

(Master Warrant Officer)

Rank probably did not have much of an effect in the way in which the lieutenant responded to the situation; it was his own personality traits which made him feel that he could work completely independently of the group in formulating an entire project proposal. He was very intelligent and an excellent writer, but he did not have good social skills and was not aware of how his behaviour was affecting the others in the group.

A similar but less dramatic situation arose when the new groups were formed after ten days. Nine different people came together to work on a group assignment and would be working together in a role-play scenario until the end of the course. This particular group, probably by chance, had a majority of officers and there were only two NCOs (one warrant officer and one sergeant) out of nine individuals. In addition to the NCOs, there were three lieutenants, two captains, one major and me. As a whole, this group tended to react more aggressively to situations than my previous group. Exhibiting a confrontational style of communication, the tension between some of the participants was apparent. No one was placed in charge of this project, which was just as frustrating to the group as when the "wrong" individual was given leadership, since there were no clear lines of authority. The major immediately took charge and started ordering people around. Some of the other individuals clearly found this frustrating. A captain who had been in the same original contingent as the major was particularly curt and tense with the major. He showed by his facial expressions that he was close to losing his temper. The entire group seemed to spend the first hour or two ordering each other around and getting frustrated with each other. There were a number of times when men got angry not only with each other, but at the actors in the role-play situations. A possible factor was that this final one and one-half day exercise took place at the very end of the course when

there had been significant partying and drinking on the two previous evenings, so a number of the participants were noticeably hung-over. The mood in the room was lethargic, dull and testy. This could have accounted for the increased aggressiveness in the participants' interactions. However, it was clear that these officers, who were used to giving orders, found it difficult to work in a cooperative manner with individuals of similar rank.

### *Civil-Military Cooperation*

While most of the instruction regarding civilian organizations occurred in the lecture and reading components of the course, some of the role-play situations addressed the civil-military relationship. One officer, during a role-play scenario in which he had to play the part of an NGO worker who was being questioned by a CIMIC operator, displayed by his comments and questions that he had a more nuanced understanding of pacifist relief and development organizations. He was familiar with peace activist terminology and attitudes and perfectly portrayed the peace activist idealism. When his character was subtly bribed by the CIMIC character offering protection in exchange for information, his responses were classic peace activist:

*We only want what's best for everyone. We are interested in a "positive peace", not just an absence of war. You should know that we would talk to you anyway if we felt there was information you needed to know. (Captain)*

His impersonation of an idealistic NGO worker was somewhat satirical, yet this individual's knowledge and interest in the peace and conflict resolution issues did not

appear mean-spirited. One received the impression that he really wished the peace activist stance to be true, but he was too jaded and cynical to believe it.

The major role-play exercise in which each group was assigned the task of figuring the logistics of dealing with an influx of 5,000 refugees into Kingston, was meant to test participants on their ability to appropriately incorporate a number of CIMIC skills and roles. The groups were given fairly wide parameters to achieve their various goals and the groups showed initiative and creativity in pulling together military resources in a difficult situation. However, they did not extend that creativity to working with the "civilian organizations" which had been included in the mix. As a participant in the exercise, I noticed this, but in the interests of research, I chose not to emphasize my opinion to my group. I had almost convinced myself that the exercise was meant to illustrate the *army's* role, and therefore the groups' responses were appropriate. However, in the debriefing session, the instructor stated very emphatically, "There was *way* too much army stuff; what about the civilian organizations?" The participants reacted to this comment with surprised looks and shrugs.

### *Nonviolent Conflict Resolution and Negotiation*

The participants were happy to have much of the focus on negotiation skills and would have liked to spend more time on this topic, since it was generally agreed that the negotiation training was at a very basic level. Several had already taken a more intense Canadian Forces negotiation course and others desired to take this training in addition to the CIMIC course. Two individuals were discussing the comparative value of battle-training versus negotiation training in the pre-deployment training period:

*Rather than doing more battle-training before an overseas mission we should do a week of negotiation and five days of cultural training. (Warrant Officer)*

*In two missions I never even fired once, not even on the [practice] range. We need more negotiation skills. (Captain)*

Many of the more detailed role-play situations involved a negotiation component and allowed individuals to practice skills they had learned in the lectures and skills-based practice sessions. In one scenario, local Kingston residents acted as “armed rebels” who were blocking a truck of relief food, and the CIMIC trainee was meant to resolve the situation using the skills he had learned in class. The “CIMIC operator” in this case happened to be a young sergeant who almost immediately got into a confrontation with the “rebels”. He described it afterward:

*So I said, you have two choices, one, we give you food (though not off of the truck) or two, we forcibly remove you. And they said, “Are you threatening us?” and I said “Yes, I am.” One of the guys almost had me. (Sergeant)*

This particular soldier was given a fairly severe dressing down by the instructor for reacting in a violent and confrontational manner. After this exercise, there was casual discussion among several participants (including the sergeant) about the difficulty some of the men were encountering in adjusting to a nonviolent form of conflict resolution:

Lieutenant One: *Yes, it's tough when you've been trained to fight.*

Lieutenant Two: *No, I like to negotiate*

Lieutenant Three: *My Daddy's bigger than your Daddy. That's what I like to do* (Laughs all around. Joking and making fun of the sergeant): *That's not exactly the CIMIC way.*

Sergeant responds: (laughing but somewhat sheepishly) *I think I kind of started up the war again. Hey, I'm helping make work for the soldiers. I'm out of a job if there's no war.*

This soldier knew that he had responded inappropriately to the situation, but he admitted that he found it difficult to respond in other ways. Some of the other participants as well, particularly NCOs from battle groups, completely failed in their negotiation roleplays and during negotiations in the final exercise; they seemed unable to even *pretend* to act nonaggressively.

While these particular individuals knew they were having trouble with the nonviolent aspects, others perceived themselves as good negotiators; yet displayed very similar aggressive tendencies in their role-play situations. An officer, who was quite willing to give advice to other participants during the practice sessions, reacted to a role-play situation by immediately resorting to threats and intimidation. He had been assigned the task of evacuating homes in order to allow returning citizens to return to their pre-war dwellings, but he did not use any of the active listening techniques and negotiation skills on which the class had been focusing. He seemed to feel that because he did not approach the civilians with guns and troops, he was "negotiating". Not surprisingly, this scenario did not have a good outcome: he basically "called in the troops" in order to evacuate the homes. During the de-briefing of this role-play, the instructor commented on the inappropriateness of the officer's response. Another officer told me that he thought he had excellent qualifications for CIMIC because he was used to dealing with people in his civilian job (as a police officer), and yet I saw no evidence of good communication skills

since he was very abrupt with, and had difficulty cooperating with, the other individuals in his group.

The irony of trained soldiers being taught negotiation and nonviolent conflict management was not lost on some of the participants. A sergeant stated that the whole situation of soldiers being taught to negotiate was rather strange because first they were taught to fight, but then, "we're doing something very different here." Although aware of the irony of this, he stated with some pride that "if there was a problem, we'd automatically kick into battle mode; we've been so trained it would be automatic."

### *Summary*

Conflict resolution in all of its forms, nonviolent and violent, is obviously central to the role of the military, and the difference between violent and nonviolent conflict resolution techniques was the underlying difference between normal military procedure and conflict resolution as taught in the CIMIC course. Some trainees had more trouble than others in learning new conflict resolution skills and interpersonal communication skills. The most obvious division was between those in what military slang calls "kill trades" and the majority who were in other military fields.

The easing of military discipline and promotion of a more relaxed atmosphere during the CIMIC training did not appear to improve the cohesiveness of the group work. In fact the lack of hierarchy hindered the efficiency of the final project. The various groups seemed to have difficulty in working cooperatively or consultatively without the guidance of a traditionally sanctioned leader. In the absence of a strong leader, both groups expended time and energy attempting to fill this void. As the Master Warrant Officer astutely observed, if those working in CIMIC are expected to work in some

capacity outside of the traditional hierarchy, then they should receive training in alternatives.

In spite of all the attention given to NGOs and the constant reminders to act as liaison with civilian organizations and the work with them in efficient and effective ways, I question whether the participants really understood the concept of working *with* civilian organizations. Although none of the other participants noticed, it was clear from my perspective that little consideration was given of what civilian organizations could do to help with the situation during the final exercise.

## INFORMAL INTERACTIONS

A significant part of this research involved twelve days of living, eating and socializing with the participants of the training course, and many of my insights and observations come from casual conversations and observations at these times.

### *Traditional Military Culture Characteristics*

While the topics addressed in this course were often very different from the usual military training, the military nature of the course, both formal and informal, was obviously and immediately apparent to an observer.

The Canadian military, like many organizational groupings, has its own language and an important aspect of "fitting in" was the use of proper terminology and colloquialisms. As time went on there were a number of jokes about me becoming militarized, mostly focusing on my use of appropriate military jargon. One evening as one of the participants and I were organizing a meeting of our small group for the next day, I unthinkingly put up my thumb, nodded, and said "I'll pass that on". Apparently this was a very "military" thing to do and the individual delightedly pointed out to others



in the group how militarized I was becoming. Again, after I had finished a presentation to the small group I jokingly ended it by chanting "OOOO-ahhhh" which is the American military chant which epitomizes military 'gung-ho' attitude. The men in the small group were greatly amused and congratulated each other on having converted me to the military. Clearly, some of their amusement was because of the 'cuteness' of a nonmilitary woman 'pretending' to be military, but their response demonstrated the significance of insider language as an indicator of group conformity. Some of the expressions were familiar in general society (such as "good to go" or "roger that"), but others, especially the acronyms, were unfamiliar, and one senior NCO made a point of explaining the meanings to me, especially the colloquialisms such as SNAFU (Situation Normal All Fucked Up) and FUBR (Fucked Up Beyond Recognition). Occasionally military terms were appropriated into nonmilitary language as when an individual used the term "units" to describe a number of NGOs coming together for a meeting. Appropriate use of acronyms and expressions conveyed that one was part of the group and an "insider".

The importance of group bonding and teamwork in the military was illustrated in numerous ways. The camaraderie and good company of the military was even given as one of the more important reasons that participants stayed in the reserves:

*I love the camaraderie of the army. After every course you make good friends. I've been with the same guys in my regiment for over 20 years. I love it. (Master Warrant Officer)*

I asked another senior NCO why he was with the military since he clearly had a strong left-wing bias and even considered himself a peace activist.

*I'm here for the sense of belonging and camaraderie. I'm here because of the structure and the company. (Master Warrant Officer)*

The need to belong extended beyond simple camaraderie, and was expressed by one sergeant as the desire to feel protected and supported by something or someone greater than oneself. This particular individual had taken part in two tours in Bosnia as a military observer and felt that one of the differences between his situation and that of the NGO workers he met was that he was never alone, always felt supported and always knew his place,

*In uniform you're protected, never alone, [you] report to someone who always knows you're there. (Sergeant)*

Being accepted into the "group" is accomplished in various ways. One way in which my syndicate group bonded was through good-hearted joking and teasing. Teasing was especially directed at those who were "different" – at me as the "civvie", at the American and at the only Francophone in the group. Teasing, as we know from elementary school gender relations, is a rather crude way of communicating and interacting with others, but people rarely seemed to take offense. There were different levels of teasing, however, and one individual in the larger class not only teased good-heartedly, but relentlessly teased others about their height, their English skills, their baldness and any other characteristics deemed worthy of insult. I commented to two of the participants (with whom I had spent many hours and had developed some trust) about his annoying and rude tendencies. Neither of them (one male and one female) was particularly bothered by his rudeness and attributed his comments to a lack of self-esteem and simply a way of getting attention. This tendency to be tolerant of fellow participants was perceptible in the group and may have manifested itself in their easy tolerance of me as a non-military participant. Most of these individuals had taken part in many military

training sessions and training scenarios in which they had to live with and accept a wide range of different people. They appeared to take people at face value. The fact that they were all in the military was a common denominator, and there appeared to be a certain loyalty to the "brotherhood of arms", irrespective of their various idiosyncrasies. A lieutenant tried to describe the sense of camaraderie he felt with other military members:

*It really is a distinct sub-culture. People really don't understand. I feel like I have more in common with another soldier, even if they are Francophone from Quebec or from a totally different life.*

There was an observable anti-Francophone bias against the French-speakers among a few of the older English-speaking NCOs. The anti-French comments tended to focus on the NCOs' perceptions that the French-speakers tended to "stick together" and that on the weekend a number of them "buggered off to Montreal together". There was some truth to this because there was a natural tendency for them to interact with each other, probably because, while their English skills were adequate for the course, French was their first language. The fact that the French-speakers were Quebecois did not seem to draw their ire so much as the perception that, by keeping themselves separate from the larger group, they were affecting group cohesiveness. There is always a certain amount of socialization which occurs naturally during military courses, and it was explained to me that some socialization events are "must attend" gatherings (which basically means any social gathering that the military personnel are under orders to attend), while other gatherings are not mandatory and are either encouraged or simply occur spontaneously. One of the senior NCOs felt that the social gatherings during this course should have been "must attend", thus basically forcing all participants, including the Francophones, to socialize and become "part of the group", in his words. Generally, however, relations

between the Anglophones and Francophones seemed quite amicable, and there was significant interaction between individuals.

The importance of group cohesiveness was once again illustrated by a conversation I had with one of the senior NCOs regarding my status as an outsider. A number of days into the course I mentioned something to this individual about not being part of the military, or being an outsider, and he replied (not particularly kindly):

*Shut up about that. Now you're part of the group. That's it. You're part of the group.*  
(Chief Warrant Officer)

Initially the individuals within my small group were fairly quiet, and the atmosphere within the group was a bit tense. There were a few different nuances to the group dynamics: the simple normal dynamics of a new group of people getting to know each other, the integration of 'outsiders' such as the U.S. sergeant and the civilian (me), and the novelty of officers and non-officers training together. At first the officers tended to be more relaxed with me while the NCOs were more aloof, but the group began to relax even after the first day, probably helped by the fact that everyone was encouraged to attend the "Meet and Greet" at the base pub on the first evening. After three days, there was a noticeable relaxation among the syndicate group members, and outsiders such as the American and me became clearly accepted into the group. At this time, more eye contact was made, individuals initiated conversations with each other (including me), and there was a general increase in joking and small talk. It became apparent fairly quickly that people in the same syndicates tended to sit together more during the social gatherings and had more social interactions. With time it was also noticeable that friendships were being formed between room-mates, within similar age groups and within ranks. The four

women (including me) naturally got to know each other quite well since we lived in the same residence and shared washroom facilities.

Participants responded to the edict of using first names while in uniform with some frustration. Military procedure does not allow for calling a superior officer by their first name, and the lower ranks in particular were at least initially uncomfortable with the practice. They felt that first names should only be used if they were in civilian dress, and if uniforms were to be worn then regular military procedure would need to be followed. Several participants mentioned that they felt uncomfortable using first names, especially with upper ranks.

*Absolutely, we either call them by rank or by last name. I never call anybody by first name.* (Warrant Officer)

*We may use first names while in civvies, but not in uniform – never.* (Lieutenant)

I first noticed the lack of first name use when I realized that, since first names were rarely used in conversation, it was difficult to remember people's names. It took me five days to learn everyone's names in my rather small group of only ten people, in spite of spending hours every day with them. Since it also took a few days for me to recognize their rank (by the insignia on their uniform), I initially had no frame of reference for individuals. Eventually, over the course of the first week, I noticed a shift; some people (but not all) started to call each other by their first names. All social gatherings were specifically designated "civilian dress" and this probably eased the transition to a first name basis.

The importance of hierarchy and rank was palpable even in the relatively relaxed atmosphere of the CIMIC training session. At the beginning of the course, there was

deference to officers in both formal and informal settings, especially in small group work<sup>9</sup>. Even before I could recognize the different ranks by their epaulets, it was usually clear which individuals carried higher rank. Individuals paid more attention when a senior officer or senior NCO spoke, they laughed more at his jokes, and generally were more polite and affirmative. The younger NCOs seemed less aware of rank than the older NCOs, often appearing more casual and relaxed with the officers. While most were somewhat deferential to senior ranking officers, the older NCOs, in particular, were very attentive to senior officers.

Uniforms and epaulets were not the only way of distinguishing rank; there were some slight but noticeable differences in mannerisms and attitude between the officers and NCOs. Generally, the NCOs seemed more “military” than officers, especially the younger officers. During an exercise in which the small groups had to obtain information from civilians in Kingston, I teased a senior NCO about getting more information from a cab driver than I did. He laughed and said “It’s just the “warrant demeanor”, implying a toughness and implacability which produced results.

The officers tended to be more verbal, more comfortable with the academic aspects of the course, and generally more civilian-like. This was particularly noticeable among the women, in that the two NCO women were far rougher and tougher in both their manner and in their verbal expression than the officer, and in fact displayed more aggressive tendencies than most of the men. Three individuals is clearly a tiny sample, so

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<sup>9</sup> I also took part in a three-day CIMIC consultation/training session with NGOs and Canadian Forces CIMIC trainees in January 2006 and the military participants did not wear uniforms. There was a much more casual atmosphere and interactions between officers and NCOs were distinctly more relaxed.

it would be imprudent to make broad generalizations, but the differences were striking.<sup>10</sup>

The general difference in demeanor and attitude between officers and NCOs was noticeable to the extent that I was not greatly surprised to find that several officers (of varying ages), who displayed a more military bearing, had been recently promoted into the officer ranks from the non-commissioned ranks.

I found the differences between the ranks less noticeable as the training continued, but I am not sure if this was because I became more accustomed to the hierarchical system or if the individuals became more relaxed with each other and thus started to downplay the rank distinctions. Most likely, both played a factor in my change in perception. I did find that as time passed and as I learned how to recognize the different ranks (by the epaulets on their uniforms), I tended to immediately check the epaulet of the person I was talking to in order to distinguish their rank.

I became aware that I was somehow placed in the officer ranks when, while talking about the difficult group project in which the junior NCO was given responsibility, another NCO surprised me with his comment that, "It would have been more natural to give leadership to the major or captain or you". I think the reason I was so surprised was because I felt like a neophyte in the military environment and certainly did not deserve the respect and responsibility given to an officer, but I can only deduce that my education and age somehow placed me within the officer ranks.

Normally officers and non-officers are housed separately during training sessions, but for the CIMIC training all the participants shared accommodations, and social

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<sup>10</sup> For a detailed analysis of gender in the military, particularly as it relates to UN peacekeeping, see Whitworth, Sandra, Men, Militarism and UN Peacekeeping: A Gendered Analysis, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004.)

gatherings were both inclusive and encouraged by the course leadership. An officer describes the difference between normal military training and CIMIC training:

*Yes, I guess we are normally separate, but this is CIMIC. We usually socialize quite separately too. (Captain)*

A lieutenant noted that he was a little uncomfortable with socializing and living with the junior NCOs because of their differences in rank. This same officer felt that there was tension at the beginning of the course because of the awkwardness between officers and NCOs, partly because they were not used to being in the same training sessions and partly because many NCOs do not have much respect for officers. This tension was noticeable in the numerous comments from the NCOs relating to "going over to the dark side", that is, becoming a commissioned officer. While the joking continued, the tension appeared to lessen as the course progressed and as individuals got to know one another.

While the regimental system is still an important part of the Canadian military, I did not observe any noticeable adherence to the regimental pride and bonding so clearly articulated by Winslow. This may have been more apparent to an insider in the military and become more obvious if the observation period had been longer. Each regiment had its own distinctive headgear; in the few instances when headgear was worn, it was clear that the different regiments were recognizable to the group. However, I did not observe any significant communications between the individuals in the various regiments. More likely, since the group taking part in the training came from across Canada and were from



all four land force commands, the regimental bonds were not an important factor in this particular group bonding process.

Although the training sessions appeared to me to be fairly regimented especially with regards to the focus on time, some individuals found the training to be too unstructured for a military training. Several participants commented on how relaxed this particular course was compared to most military trainings. Once during a break there was talk of the "relaxed" atmosphere and how some of the individuals were finding this very frustrating. For example, two of the older, most senior NCOs were visibly annoyed by the disorganization which occurred when the entire group was ushered outside to have a group photo taken and had to wait in the cold.

*This is not the way the army does things. What the hell is going on?* (Chief Warrant Officer)

Several people noticed their muttered comments and complaints and there was joking about the disruptive influence of having one civilian in the group, and how this affected military discipline. By March 7, just over half way through the course, discipline was starting to break down and people were coming later and later to classes, which, according to some participants, was not normal for a military training session.

### *Self-Perceptions*

One of the most striking and recurring observations I made during the training course was the tendency of reservists to differentiate themselves from regular military forces. Since CIMIC is a reserve capability, the issue of reserve forces versus regular forces came up naturally in a number of settings, and the animosity which these reservists felt towards regular forces was tangible. According to reservists, regular forces are

“regular warheads”, they have no flexibility and do not understand the real world, and they do not know how to make decisions because they are used to being told what to do at all times.

*They tend to be more immature because they don't have any responsibility until they're*  
30. (Sergeant)

*Some are so regimented that they can't take a crap without going by the book.* (Warrant Officer)

Although not everyone agreed that only reservists could do a good job in CIMIC and some felt that it really depended on the person, the general consensus was that reservists would do a better job. One rather blunt and very traditionally military sergeant who had served in both the regular and reserve forces felt that regulars were better trained and more professional soldiers, which was natural. When asked if reservists were better equipped to do CIMIC, he snorted, laughed and said “Oh yeah” as if it was a foregone conclusion that they would make better CIMIC operators.

While reservists clearly perceived themselves as having unique characteristics which encompass the best of both civilian and military worlds, these differences may not be universal. Two officers freely volunteered that some reservists can be “harder core” (that is, more militaristic) than regular forces, possibly because they feel they have something to prove to the regular military. One of these officers also commented on the tendency of some reservists to have a more “romantic” view of the military than regular military who consider it just a job, as was demonstrated when a senior NCO spoke proudly of being “twice the citizen”.

The pride in having both military and civilian strengths was manifested in their explanations of why they would be good CIMIC operators and the fact that they generally gave answers which related to "people-skills".

*I've worked with a lot of people and different cultures. (Sergeant)*

*I'm pretty tolerant. (Major)*

*Just life skills and experience. Always dealing with different types of people. (NCO turned Captain)*

*Trained in negotiations, conflict management, experienced in dealing with high stress situations. (Lieutenant)*

When asked what kind of attributes or skills were needed for CIMIC (irrespective of their own skills), most either mentioned the personality traits already noted or emphasized the need to have a combination of military and civilian skills. Flexibility, creativity, initiative and cultural awareness were considered especially important attributes for CIMIC operators:

*Culturally aware, think on your feet, strong in languages, well-spoken, flexible but aware of cultures that only respect physical strength. (Lieutenant)*

*Even-tempered. Able to think on your feet. Analyze situations quickly, make decisions quickly, but not lose sight of your mission or the Commander's tasks. (Major)*

*Be creative in the community, may need to bend rules, be flexible. (Speaker)*

Relevant civilian job skills are often mentioned in written CIMIC material as an important factor in what makes reservists ideal for CIMIC. However, relatively few of the participants mentioned their civilian jobs or training as an important factor in making them good CIMIC operators. One officer mentioned training in public affairs and another officer noted his background in project management as an important skill. The survey results described in the participant overview also show that while some participants (e.g., police officers) certainly had transferable skills many did not (e.g., draftsman, geophysicist).

#### *Civil-Military Cooperation*

There appeared to be a common assumption that some individuals just did not have the personal characteristics to make a good CIMIC person, and the class as a whole was aware that certain people would not make appropriate CIMIC operators. For example, a group of individuals were having a casual conversation about the course and course material and a sergeant mentioned an individual (another sergeant) who was not doing well in the negotiation role-plays and who was frustrated by the academic nature of the training session:

*I don't think \_\_\_\_\_s cut out for this - he's more hard-core. (Sergeant)*

CIMIC norms and expectations were mitigated both positively and negatively by peer interactions. Meal-time conversations often revolved around a recent speaker, or a role-play which the group had just completed. Since the course content dealt with

common civil-military issues and did not dwell on typical military procedure, there was a natural tendency to focus on these topics. Thus, while there was a certain amount of informal conversation relating to regular military issues such as previous battle-training and military experiences, the interactions between participants were influenced by the course content. Many individuals showed keen interest in topics such as development, project management, civilian organizations and negotiation techniques, and the conversations were likely not much different than those between civilians.

On the other hand, the more junior (and younger) NCOs tended to socialize together, and there was a certain amount of complaining among them that there was too much boring theory in the course and not enough hands-on practice. Their common complaints and frustrations appeared to exacerbate their discontent. I noticed that when these younger NCOs were basically alone together the language was rougher and there was more talk of previous military trainings and experiences, and less interest in the CIMIC course content<sup>11</sup>.

Jokes can reveal feelings which lie under the surface and which the speaker might not be willing to outwardly express. For example, after a lecture in which the "commander's mission" was emphasized, a sergeant noted that he was happy they had finished talking about NGOs and were back to more military matters. A captain who had recently been promoted from the NCO ranks laughed sarcastically and joked:

*I was going to say, but what about the children?? (MWO turned Captain)*

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<sup>11</sup> Since the meals were cafeteria style, I was able to "eavesdrop" on conversations in which I was not actually engaged.

In spite of the importance most participants genuinely placed on the conflict resolution and negotiation aspects of the course, private conversations revealed frustrations with organizations that would not allow weapons use or would not work with the military for ideological or practical reasons.

*Seriously though, they all think that if only we all just put down our guns, we'd all be fine... and then one guy doesn't. . .* (comment overheard in the hallway).

### *Summary*

Living, eating and socializing with the group provided insights that would have been unavailable to me if I had simply interviewed the participants or even just taken part in the classroom work. In informal situations, participants were free to express their true feelings, whether through jokes, sarcastic comments or outright criticism of the course content. These perceptions and feelings were often favourable to the "CIMIC way" but sometimes revealed a discomfort with the topics and a desire to return to "regular" military matters.

The tone and ambience of the CIMIC training session was a combination of military and civilian, formal and informal, relaxed and rigid, and the atmosphere became slightly more "civilianized" as the course progressed. Initially, the influence of traditional military structure and culture made it difficult for the participants to relax with other ranks and to call each other by their first names as directed by the CIMIC organizers. Eventually though, first names began to be used, there was less adherence to strict timelines, and officers and NCOs related more. The increased use of first names, more relaxed standards in terms of timeliness and the non-military nature of many of the topics discussed had resulted in a more civilianized ambience.

Individuals reacted to the loosening of the rules in different ways; while many were quite comfortable and even took advantage of the relaxed rules, others, particularly older NCOs, were frustrated and unhappy with what they perceived as a lack of discipline. It should be noted that the atmosphere was only more relaxed in comparison to the very rigid military norm; the training remained a military course. The CIMIC course appeared to be challenging traditional military culture attributes such as rank and hierarchy, group bonding, forceful conflict resolution, and strict obedience.

By the end of the twelve day course, all participants were well aware of a somewhat indefinable entity called "the CIMIC way", and while it was often used jokingly or sarcastically, the majority of trainees understood the implications of the term. The term came to represent a particular attitude or response characterized by nonviolence, open-mindedness, tolerance and creativity. In response to a negotiation roleplay in which a participant basically used the threat of violence rather than negotiating, his instructor stated (very seriously), "That's not exactly the CIMIC way." Sometimes during casual conversation if an individual was aggressive, or would swear or get angry, another participant would laugh and say "That's not CIMIC." The sergeant who responded too aggressively in a role-play situation knew very well that he had not reacted in a "CIMIC way" and laughed sheepishly after being teased by others for his reaction. The tone of the teasing and the reaction to the term "CIMIC way" was relatively light-hearted, but as I noticed in many different situations, there was a range of reactions to how seriously participants reacted to this concept. Some were serious at the outset about learning new ways of interacting and others seemed to simply go through the motions.

## **Eight**

### **Conclusions**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This research studied the impact of military culture on particular individuals in a very specific time and place; the training of Canadian reservist soldiers for the work of civil-military cooperation within the context of the Canadian army during the time period February 28, 2005 to March 11, 2005. The research focused on two main issues: 1) the perceptions and reactions of the participants to the actual CIMIC training itself; and 2) the role which Canadian military culture played in influencing their reactions to, and reception of, the non-traditional skills and training which was the main focus of the CIMIC training.

The term CIMIC is not just an acronym for civil-military cooperation, but within the Canadian military it signifies both an entity (a subdivision of the Canadian military) and a concept or even a doctrine. This concept known as CIMIC appears to have its own set of rules - both implicit and explicit - and to a greater or lesser extent, attempts to straddle the line between the military and civilian spheres of influence. The CIMIC course itself, by its content, methodology and choice of instructors, challenged traditional military cultural attributes such as rank and hierarchy, group bonding, forceful conflict resolution, and strict obedience.

The three core functions of CIMIC - civil-military liaison, support to the civil environment, and support to the force - were covered in detail in all three modes of



instruction: readings, lectures and role-plays. However, while the CIMIC course outline signified a different military training than normal, it does not tell the whole story. The differences between traditional military training and CIMIC training emerged even more strongly in the logistical details such as meal arrangements, social event planning, and accommodations.

The selection process of Canadian Forces personnel for the CIMIC training, the educational background and the rank of the trainees all played a part in determining the extent to which individuals effectively learned and demonstrated appropriate CIMIC skills. Peer interactions in social gatherings and in informal responses to lectures, role-plays and group projects illustrated the degree to which CIMIC values were being internalized and accepted.

While many of the topics would not be considered traditionally military, they were taught within the context of a military system. Both the system, and the military values assumed by individuals within the system, influenced the transmission and reception of the non-traditional CIMIC skills and training.

## COURSE DESIGN

CIMIC organizers are focusing on a military model which fits easily into Moskos' (2000) "post-modern" scheme of western militaries in which rank is diminished, there is an increase in non-traditional, multinational missions, and there is an increased inclusiveness in its demographics and desire to communicate with outside agencies. Furthermore, CIMIC exemplifies the more inclusive peacekeeping model with diverse values and norms within Dunivin's (1994) spectrum of military models. The course

organizers are striving to teach the softer, interpersonal skills needed for civil-military cooperation, but within the constraints and structure of normal military training procedure.

The ideal CIMIC operator is called upon to demonstrate both civilian and military skills and attributes. The organizers want to produce individuals who are well aware of military rank, but who are able to overcome the limitations of traditional rank and hierarchy in order to work in the interface between the civilian world and the military world. They want individuals who are battle-trained and capable of regular soldierly tasks as well as being well-versed in mediation and negotiation techniques. They are working with soldiers who are socialized by military training to put their unit first, but want them to be willing to show individual initiative and possibly make decisions which will not be popular with the majority of their peer group. CIMIC organizers also want to produce people who have some knowledge of development projects and the basic needs of communities, but who will be willing to put their feelings for the community aside for the sake of their military commander's mission.

CIMIC as an entity and a concept is in a state of flux in the Canadian Forces, and while there was a relatively clear purpose, vision and mandate, there were inconsistencies in the way these were portrayed within the course. The course was specifically constructed to deal with the innate contradictions of CIMIC, but it was somewhat inconsistent in approach, resulting in confusion and frustration for many participants. The degree to which they were supposed to be "military" or "civilian" was left ambiguous, and while some individuals seemed able to cope with the inconsistencies, others needed firmer guidelines. One of the more contentious issues was whether CIMIC units promote

development projects or act primarily as liaisons. Unclear guidelines may result in CIMIC personnel being ill-prepared for actual circumstances if, once they are in the field, they are expected to be involved in development projects while official CIMIC policy de-emphasizes this aspect of CIMIC work.

## SELECTION OF TRAINEES

CIMIC organizers, instructors and participants all attested to the unique nature of civil-military work and the need to recruit individuals who were flexible, creative, culturally aware and tolerant, and able to show initiative. Some of these attributes are at odds with common military values of obedience, hierarchy, small-group orientation and loyalty. Reservists were considered ideal candidates because they were perceived to be less "military" and therefore better able to understand the civilian perspective. This is a gross generalization, however, and it does not take into account the diversity of the participants in terms of age, civilian career, education and especially rank and military occupation, all of which may influence their suitability for CIMIC work. A majority of noncommissioned officers were employed in civilian occupations within enforcement fields, fields which traditionally promote hierarchy, power differentials and dominance which not conducive to CIMIC values. Further, a number of the participants in this training were reservists whose full-time occupation was in the army, or who were supplementary reservists who had retired from the military and had been re-instated.

Most of the individuals taking part in the training were not hand-picked because they were particularly suitable for the work or had the desired personality traits; they were self-selected and had become involved for a variety of reasons. Although there

were individuals who felt they had “found their place”, the reasons given for joining CIMIC were often pragmatic and situational: wanting to learn skills they would actually use in the field<sup>12</sup>; wanting to be deployed overseas; thinking they were too old to continue in the battlegroups.

Training is a key component of military life and most of a soldier’s time in the military is spent in training. The implication of this is that a few participants seemed to feel that by simply attending the appropriate courses they would become good CIMIC operators, regardless of whether they were able to effectively operationalize the concepts.

The most important component in discerning whether soldiers are personally suitable for civil-military cooperation work is the selection process. The processes for the various Landforces were inconsistent and unregulated. While all the Landforces have different procedures, Central Landforce has the most stringent requirements, probably because of a larger base of applicants. Suitable applicants in this area are chosen on the basis of personality profiles, interviews and taking part in four role-plays. While personal attitudes and inclinations are important indicators, consideration should also be given to military occupation and rank.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF CIMIC IDEALS

CIMIC operators must have a certain skill-set in order to work effectively in a liaison capacity and support both the civil environment and the force, and the course instructors covered these skills in detail. Underlying the topics and course structure was

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<sup>12</sup> These were usually battle-trained individuals who thought they would not be able to use traditional battle skills. Clearly, within the context of the Canadian military policy in Afghanistan in fall of 2006, this may no longer be an accurate statement.

clearly an attempt to set a tone and attitude within the session which was distinctly "CIMIC" and different from the regular military.

The training course organizers distinguished the CIMIC training from regular military training in a number of ways. These include: 1) focusing on the unique nature of reservist forces (that is, being both military and civilian); 2) maintaining that participants use first names with each other, regardless of rank; 3) encouraging mixed rank social gatherings; 4) setting aside traditional military skills such as weapons use and concentrating on nonviolent conflict resolution skills and culture learning; and 5) encouraging initiative and creativity in planning and decision making.

The incongruity of being both an obedient *and* a creative soldier was explicitly described by course organizers as a source of tension in CIMIC; trainees were encouraged to use creativity in manipulating the military system in order to achieve CIMIC objectives which might be at variance with regular military procedure. Since officers are traditionally educated to think more analytically, while NCOs are generally trained to follow orders and use specific skills, it follows that officers would be more comfortable dealing with this contradiction.

Civil-military cooperation is not conducive to small group formation – a military attribute which is apparent in both traditional military battle structure (in which "sections" of eight to twelve soldiers are under command of a sergeant) and military training structure. The CIMIC training organizers seemed to shift group membership within the training session with the purpose of breaking down the focus on strong group bonding. The need for CIMIC operators to remain more autonomous and not as focused on the traditional cohesive sub-group may be an important way to increase the

effectiveness of their role as liaison. Group identification and group bonding has long been considered an important factor in military socialization; group bonding and shared experiences are important in battle, yet "small group bonding can foster and maintain inappropriate norms" (Winslow 1997: 74) as informal networks over-ride the formal system of values and norms. Furthermore, as Homans stated, groups can impact the ability to empathize with outsiders: "the greater the inward solidarity, the greater the outward hostility" (1950:113) CIMIC personnel, in their liaison roles as facilitators between many disparate groups, need to reduce that outward hostility. Nevertheless, traditional military group bonding may have a beneficial effect if the more formalized CIMIC structure becomes standardized. The individuals within the standard 21 person units might coalesce to provide the support, solidarity and unit identification of a traditional army unit. This type of bonding might also serve the purpose of reinforcing CIMIC norms and characteristics within the group which would increase the efficacy of the unit in its civil-military role.

The ways in which conventional military hierarchy was challenged were the most obvious deviation from normal policy. Requiring participants to wear uniforms while at the same time encouraging the use of first names; desegregating social gatherings, accommodations and mealtimes; and giving low-ranking individuals authority over higher-ranking individuals in role-play situations all served to accustom military personnel to different situations in which the usual rules did not apply. The CIMIC course however, was inconsistent and at times contradictory in promoting these changes. Military rules were eased, but only to a certain extent; participants who became too casual were reprimanded by their instructors. Trainees were encouraged to disregard rank

among themselves, but when the course commander addressed the class, strict military procedure was followed. The military objectives of CIMIC - fulfilling the commander's mission and acting as force multiplier - were contradictory to the civilian support objectives supported by anecdotal reports. Participants were placed in situations where traditional hierarchy was eliminated, but they were not taught alternative procedural methods. CIMIC instructional material was often non-military in tone and purpose, but it was presented in a traditional military environment to which all of the participants were accustomed. Thus, the extent to which they were able to learn and incorporate the new material was mitigated by the environment: nonofficers rarely took part in discussions during lectures; the reading material was only partially read; and higher ranking individuals tended to dominate discussions.

#### REACTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

Regardless of their knowledge of CIMIC prior to the course, individuals soon became aware that CIMIC expectations were different from those of the traditional Canadian Forces; the differences were noted and reacted to in different ways. Superficial differences in course expectations, such as the loosening of discipline and a more "civilian" atmosphere, were embraced by some, while others (often older NCOs) were frustrated and unhappy with what they perceived as a lack of discipline. Reactions to the underlying ideas and ideals of CIMIC varied as well and depended on a number of factors.

The effects of rank and hierarchy on the training were noticeable in two major ways: firstly, in the ways individuals received and perceived all of the CIMIC training in

different ways depending on their rank; and secondly, in their reactions to the deliberate attempts of the CIMIC organizers to circumvent the traditional hierarchy.

The most noticeable difference between the ranks was in their comfort level with the various methods of instruction; NCOs showed a clear preference for the more “hands-on” aspects of the training, while officers, who also finding those aspects very valuable, generally appreciated the more theoretical aspects as well. This difference can be understood within the context of the education level and civilian occupations of the participants; the majority of the officers had university degrees and more “white-collar” occupations, while none of the NCOs had completed a university degree and were more likely to be in the skilled trade sector. As well, although rank differences are diminishing, Canadian military personnel are still accustomed to traditional differences in officer and nonofficer training. In general, officers are educated in university level courses in theoretical concepts and theories, and NCOs take technical training.

NCOs displayed the most traditional attitudes regarding discipline and rank and hierarchy and seemed to have the most difficulty becoming accustomed to the more “civilian-like” atmosphere of the training session. Younger NCOs in particular were more comfortable with more traditional military expectations even as they became aware of the different CIMIC aspects. They had trouble understanding the concept of nonviolent conflict resolution in both theory and practice; they were concerned about being given too much responsibility for their rank (as when they were told that they might need to speak with the media); they wanted to distinguish themselves from nongovernmental organizations; and they tended to socialize together even as the CIMIC organizers encouraged all ranks to socialize together. The military occupation of the participants had



an impact on their reception of CIMIC skills and training; individuals who came from the battle groups or what the military call “kill trades” had the most difficulty with various aspects of the training, especially with negotiations and nonviolent conflict resolution.

Officers seemed to better appreciate the importance of the military/NGO relationship, although the differences between NCOs and officers diminished over the course of the training session. Ultimately, though, both officers and NCOs had difficulty integrating the civilian needs and strengths into their actions. Their knowledge of civilian organizations had increased, and they knew that, according to CIMIC policy, they needed to take the civilian organizations into account when making decisions in the field. However, when the participants had to actually operationalize their knowledge, they fell back on what they knew – the military. Furthermore, individuals accustomed to the clear structure and chain of command of the military found it difficult to understand the flat management style and consensus style of many NGOs. Even more problematic for individuals who consider security synonymous with power, was the inability of some to understand the pacifist tendencies of many civilian organizations; with this incomprehension came a certain amount of anger, frustration and ridicule. While course participants were proud that they were not “regular warheads”, frequent allusions to not wanting people to think that they were sitting around “singing fucking Kumbaya” indicated a desire to differentiate themselves from NGOs.

Participants had difficulty with CIMIC’s challenges to military hierarchy and while many eventually started using first names, their discomfort with it illustrated the authority and power of the ranking system. The inability to overcome the challenges of

the group project where the normal chain of authority was overturned attests to the lack of appropriate alternatives and resources to respond to the situation.

The training strongly emphasized technique, but there was a lack of creative problem-solving approaches, which resulted in individuals falling back on familiar (sometimes inappropriate) responses. Most of the individuals in this training session were not academics; they felt that the opportunity to actually practice some of the skills taught and to practice "doing CIMIC" in the more extended scenarios to be the most important part of the course. Clearly, every soldier in the group learned a great deal about CIMIC procedure, conflict resolution and negotiation skills and interviewing techniques, even when they "failed" their assessments. While most of the individuals had learned what they were *supposed* to do in a given scenario, (although this depends on how carefully they were paying attention in class) there was acknowledged difficulty in putting this knowledge into practice. Of greater concern are the individuals who *thought* they were acting in suitable ways, but who exhibited a threatening demeanor and mindset which was inappropriate to CIMIC procedure. They seemed to believe that they were suited to civil-military work simply by virtue of being reservists (that is, not regular "war-heads") and because they had completed the training. By the end of the course, participants were well aware of proper "CIMIC" behaviour and knew that some individuals, while possibly excellent soldiers, were not suitable for CIMIC.

Informal interactions mitigated the CIMIC message both positively and negatively. On the one hand, some of the NCOs tended to keep themselves separate and preferred to focus on more traditional military topics. On the other hand, the desire for reservists to differentiate themselves from regular military personnel, and the tendency to

amplify the differences between them, had the effect of supporting the CIMIC message as they concentrated on their more "civilian" attributes.

Individuals left the training with varying amounts of relevant skills and knowledge, but all increased their knowledge of CIMIC-related issues: they gained knowledge about civilian organizations, especially nongovernmental organizations; learned about some the basic organizational differences between military and civilian organizations; became more proficient at, and became aware of their own strengths and deficiencies in negotiation and interviewing techniques; and were exposed to military situations where hierarchy and rank was de-emphasized. Some trainees left with an enhanced pride and enthusiasm for CIMC work, while others seemed to realize that civil-military cooperation was not the most appropriate occupation for them<sup>13</sup>.

Some trainees indicated by their attitudes and comments that they were not interested in learning the kinds of skills needed to work in civil-military cooperation. I would be very hesitant to send them on a civil-military cooperation mission, even if they completed all the trainings relevant to CIMIC. Others perceived themselves as possessing excellent CIMIC qualifications because they were exemplary soldiers, were well-respected by the ranks and had taken all the CIMIC and CIMIC related trainings possible - but were narrow-minded and aggressive in their interpersonal interactions. Finally, there were individuals who had truly found their "niche" in civil-military cooperation. These trainees had excellent "soft" skills prior to the training, were committed to learning more

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<sup>13</sup> Almost a year after the training, in January 2006, I spoke with one of the more "military" course participants. He told me that he was going to Afghanistan in the near future, but "not as CIMIC, thank God!" He was implying that he was looking forward to going as a regular soldier.

in the training session, and were genuinely enthusiastic about the direction the Canadian Forces was taking in this field.

## MILITARY CULTURE AND CULTURE CHANGE

Traditional military culture as defined by the classical culture concept has a set of values, symbols and artifacts which differentiate it from other cultures and make it easily identifiable. This traditional concept is based on a warrior mindset and conveys the message that conflict resolution entails an aspect of physical force, it fosters an enemy mentality of "us versus them" by encouraging strong group bonding and it inculcates attitudes of rank and hierarchy. This orthodox portrayal of a soldier culture assumes a Combat Masculine Warrior (CMW) mentality that is considered necessary and appropriate for soldiers in battle groups preparing for war. Winslow based her socio-cultural study of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) in Somalia on this limited and bounded military culture definition. While this traditional military culture concept does not fully represent a contemporary Canadian military which is changing, diverse, contested and inconsistent, its characteristics form the core of the culture of the military worldview.

Manifestations of these traditional military culture attributes were evident in the CIMIC training session and in some cases negatively affected the reception of CIMIC skills such as negotiation and mediation activities. The influence of rank and hierarchy was especially difficult to overcome even in situations where the organizers made deliberate attempts to operationalize a less hierarchical system. Also problematic was a strong sense of military pride and separateness, since one of the ways this was manifested was a tendency to disparage civilians and nongovernmental organizations which were not "military" enough.

While proud to be in the military, the individuals in this training session were almost all part-time soldiers with civilian occupations, and they generally prided

themselves on being more open-minded, flexible and creative than “regular warheads” – implying that they were not as “military” as soldiers in the regular forces. However, even though the research participants were generally not involved in the military on a full-time basis, they were socialized to the military culture in various ways: all had attended basic training, which is conventionally considered the main military socialization vehicle; most joined the reserves at a very young age and so had spent most, or all, of their adult lives involved with the military, a number commented on a fascination with war-toys from an early age, indicating the effects of popular culture; others commented on family norms which assumed/supported military service; possible mitigating influences such as non-military spouses or non-military careers were lessened because a high percentage were unmarried, and finally, many of the NCOs in particular were in traditional male-dominated enforcement careers. Thus, many of the participants were strongly conditioned to accept traditional military values even though they were part-time soldiers who were interested in learning more about the “softer” side of the military – civil-military cooperation.

Cultures change as a result of forces at all levels: within a culture; between societies; as a result of a change of meaning in existing relations (Wright 1998); and through external forces. All of these forces are evident in Canadian military culture as it changes in response to different factors: members with a diversity of views and attitudes; changes in relation to Canadian civilian society; changes in the Canadian Forces’ mandate and purpose; and changing international geopolitical demands. Although contested within the Canadian military, the role of civil-military cooperation is apparently gaining prominence in the Canadian Forces as CIMIC becomes institutionalized in terms of both training operations and in the operational environment. If, as Pinch states, the Canadian Forces have become “more democratized, liberalized, civilianized, and individualized” (2000:156), then CIMIC may be a way of operationalize the postmodern

concept of military culture change. CIMIC epitomizes this concept – a military in which rank is reduced, combat roles are deleted, the missions are likely to be of a multinational post-conflict nature, and the force itself is more civilianized and inclusive. However, even when there are individuals who are supportive and believe in the concept, recent changes in the Canadian Forces mandate will impact the extent to which the postmodern concept will be received by the military. Furthermore, given the size of the program and the relatively small number of Canadian soldiers being trained in CIMIC, the degree to which CIMIC values will impact the “transformation” of the Canadian military as a whole is questionable. Finally, the establishment of a discrete and separate Canadian Forces civil-military component may slow down the process of democratization since the more traditional “warrior” faction can now devolve the relationship oriented “contact skill” aspects to the CIMIC personnel.

#### FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The studies and reports which resulted from the Canadian military’s ill-fated mission in Somalia in 1993 highlighted the importance of military culture in analysing the suitability of individuals for multidimensional military missions. The findings from these reports confirmed the necessity of sending appropriately trained individuals into nontraditional military operations, and the need to have effective leadership and organizational structure. Winslow’s research, in particular, was valuable in focusing attention on the extent to which military culture will affect individual and group behaviour in stressful situations.

This thesis provided a glimpse into the attitudes, perceptions and reactions of a diverse group of soldiers as they took part in a training program which emphasized some of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective peacekeeping: political, social,

cultural and religious education; conflict resolution and mediation training; human rights knowledge; and humanitarian and development aid information. Most of these soldiers were training for the types of multinational overseas missions described in the peacekeeping literature; missions in which they would be working with a diverse group of actors, including civil society, nongovernmental relief and development organizations, bilateral donors, and the media as well as other militaries. The CIMIC course was partially effective in transmitting these nontraditional skills and training, but the effectiveness was mitigated by inconsistencies in tone, purpose and planning procedure as all actors involved – participants, instructors and planners – attempted to straddle the civil-military divide.

The research focused on the impact of military culture, with the implicit assumption that military culture is a discrete, bounded entity as described by the classical definition of culture. CIMIC exemplified complexities, inconsistencies and contradictions to this traditional definition of military culture. CIMIC norms included: promotion of nonviolent conflict resolution; openness to Others; an attitude of individual responsibility and initiative; and a flatter, less hierarchical style of communication. Within the context of allegedly neutral civil-military cooperation, values such as loyalty, obedience, and “fighting spirit” were challenged as well, since there was no enemy and no “unit” loyalty.

In order to become effective CIMIC operators, the participants needed to accept new cultural norms which were contradictory to those to which they had been socialized. However, compliance to new norms is not a simple process and must occur at all levels within the military culture; from the institutional level to the individual soldier in the field. Firstly, institutional support is imperative in an organizationally based society such

as the military; the Canadian Forces must institutionally and logistically support CIMIC structure and training. Secondly, given the importance of rank and hierarchy in the military, individuals within the chain of command (especially higher ranking officers) must be supportive of CIMIC. At the operational level, CIMIC and its norms need to be sanctioned by the NCOs, who are the “unacknowledged core of any military organization” (Morton 2003:138), and who wield a strong influence over individual soldiers. Finally, the norms must be accepted by the individuals who are working in the CIMIC operational environment.

CIMIC, or civil-military cooperation, by its very definition lends itself to contradictions, and there were inconsistencies and contestations apparent on several levels: within the Canadian political system; within the Canadian military itself; at the level of course design; and within the responses of the course participants.

Since Pearson’s promotion of peacekeeping in the 1950’s, the Canadian government has actively promoted an image of Canada’s military as a leader in peacekeeping. However, Canada can no longer be considered a committed peacekeeper, and “an enemy-centred mentality is creeping inexorably into the Canadian military psyche” (Dorn 2006). The Canadian defence lobby, headed by General Rick Hillier and supported by Prime Minister Harper, has endorsed a more “robust” role for Canada’s military in Afghanistan, ostensibly as part of the fight against terrorism.

The role of the Canadian Forces is inextricably linked to the political consciousness of the Canadian government and the Canadian public; its mandate must correspond to the requirements of any given political situation. Within the military itself are inconsistencies in terms of mandate and objective; the combat/peacekeeper



dichotomy represents the most contentious area of contestation. Some factions have called for the Canadian military to promote and utilize its peacekeeping expertise as a way of carving out a unique role for itself in international matters. Others have argued for the necessity of maintaining a strong military force both for defensive purposes and as a way of gaining the respect of other countries, particularly the United States. However, changing from a warfighting role to a peacekeeping role challenges the most important key concept in the military culture – the necessary use of force. Dunivin's research into the strength of the Combat Masculine Warrior (CMW) paradigm in militaries implies that a change in this key concept will be strongly contested at all levels; factions within the CFs have actively fought against losing the combat role.

Inconsistencies were particularly apparent at the CIMIC course level. The CF44E course was conceptualized to incorporate the inherent contradictions of traditional military expectations and CIMIC expectations; the extent to which this strategy was successful in producing effective CIMIC operators was dependent on the people involved - instructors *and* trainees. At the instructional level, the mandate of CIMIC was unclear, while trainees were confused by the inconsistencies portrayed by the course and instructors. CIMIC ideology will be a source of tension and confusion to CIMIC personnel since differences in espoused values versus "values-in-use" may become evident once in the field. For example, individuals may react in two ways to the new CIMIC expectations: either individuals will simply ignore the new CIMIC guiding principles and continue in the more traditional ways; or worse, individuals may be trained to disregard aspects of the military hierarchical system, incorporate this into their behaviour, and then be placed squarely back into it. It is unrealistic and unfair to change

the cultural norms of soldiers working in CIMIC without corresponding institutional change.

The trainees did not respond uniformly to the CIMIC training session. Two countervailing forces were observable at the individual level: those individuals who were able to comply with the new CIMIC norms, and those who were not able to do so. The extent of compliance depended on a number of factors, including age, rank, education, military occupations and personal qualities of flexibility and open-mindedness. NCOS, especially in the more junior ranks, and those from battle occupations were the most likely to retain traditional military values, and had the most difficulty learning new skills such as nonviolent conflict resolution. Officers were the most likely to embrace CIMIC norms and values. The officers were less likely to be in traditional enforcement civilian careers and had higher levels of education, signifying possible indicators for CIMIC suitability.

All of the candidates for CIMIC are part of the Canadian Reserve Force, but as has been shown, reservists come from a variety of backgrounds, have diverse interests, and have differing abilities. Therefore, a good selection process is critical for work in the CIMIC field so that those reservists best suited for the work are chosen. Self-selection is inadequate because individuals may volunteer for the wrong reasons - because they want a guaranteed tour or feel they are getting too old for battlegroups. Volunteers must be selected specifically for qualities of flexibility, open-mindedness, creativity, and the desire to work in the field of civil-military cooperation.

This research has shown that soldiers are trained and socialized in skills and attitudes that make effective communication and cooperation with individuals in other

cultural settings and in post-conflict and peace support operations difficult and problematic. The trainees who had the most difficulty incorporating CIMIC norms and utilizing the new skills were those who were the most invested in traditional military culture. The participants were well aware of this. The NCO who commented "I don't think \_\_\_\_\_s cut out for this - he's more hard-core", was simply stating what the CIMIC organizers had implied throughout the session - that overtly soldier-like characteristics are contraindicators for suitability for CIMIC work.

Reservists are chosen for CIMIC work, in part, because they are considered to have both military and civilian characteristics; the implication being that they are less military than regular forces. The participants in the training session concurred, and considered themselves less "hard-core" than regular soldiers. However, many displayed military attributes which may affect their ability to act in appropriate ways to civil-military cooperation engagement: they may automatically "kick into battle mode" in situations where negotiation is a more appropriate response; have difficulty empathizing with, and/or maintaining neutrality with, those outside of their own insular military cohort; and/or be so accustomed to following orders that they are unable to make appropriate decisions when placed outside of their normal military structure. Traditional military values such as discipline and obedience may not only affect the ability to be effective CIMIC personnel, but will also increase the likelihood of compliance to the more traditional standards. Furthermore, the degree to which individuals comply with CIMIC norms may also be dependent on the operational context. The participants of the CIMIC training session of February 2005 were being prepared for low-level conflict or post-conflict operations; since then, CIMIC operators have been sent into full conflict

situations such as in southern Afghanistan. A soldier, even one trained in civil-military cooperation, is more likely to respond as a warrior when placed in a battle situation; this was not anticipated in the training session.

The inevitable contradictions of the CIMIC concept, the strength of the traditional military concept, and the emerging political reality means that there will likely be movement away from the CIMIC ideals and towards a more militarized entity, which will be reflected in the training sessions. The majority opinion on this movement will generally be positive: most soldiers will be more comfortable with a more clearly defined military mandate, and most civilian organizations will be happy to have an unambiguous boundary between military and civilian mandates. Nevertheless, the political situations resulting in the types of complex emergencies which increased military-civilian interface and the societal changes which led to the postmodern military concept will not disappear. The military and civilian spheres will still need to communicate and work with each other in the most effective way possible, and the need for CIMIC will continue. Regardless of the official military stance, there will still be individuals who have found their niche in CIMIC; who are interested in the "touchy-feely" aspects of liaison work, who will effectively use their negotiation skills; and who will "use" the military system to best benefit the civilians with whom they liaise.

Various aspects of CIMIC represent values and norms that imply a changing military culture, or a "post-modern" military, but there are strong forces within the traditional military which will impact the degree to which the culture will actually change. Ultimately, a military is predicated on the assumption of physical force - it is the "profession of arms"- and challenging this assumption will lead to defensive strategies on

the part of its proponents and leaders. Traditionalists fear that taking away this core *raison d'être* of the military will result in a civilianization and loss of purpose that will ultimately lead to the demise of the military. It is readily apparent that a concept such as civil-military cooperation, which uses part-time soldiers and focuses on civilian skills and attributes, represents this civilianization and will be considered a threat to traditional military culture. Perhaps the idea of the post-modern military concept was premature, since in today's military hierarchy remains strong, women and minorities are still conspicuously absent, CIMIC guidelines are attempting to keep CIMIC operators focused on its military objectives in complex emergency situations, and the Canadian military is being placed in situations which are clearly combat-oriented.

The limitations of the classical culture concept have been well articulated by numerous authors and these limitations are valid within the contexts described. However, the Canadian military culture presents a unique context in which the classical definition is appropriate and valid. A classically bounded and consistent military culture is indicated by: a robust hierarchical system which focuses on leaders and obedience; a bounded society in which distinctive dress distinguish members from all other societies; and an overarching value of unlimited liability. Furthermore, while problems with the culture concept often revolve around issues of exclusion and simplistic differentiation, these are not problematic within the context of the military since the military systematically and actively attempts to keep itself excluded and separate from civilians. Finally, culture change may occur, but only to the extent to which non-core values are being challenged; the strength of certain core values may be such that attempts to change the culture will fail.. In this particular context, the classical cultural concept was a valid construct which

was useful in helping to describe and analyze the perceptions and behaviour of the CIMIC course participants. While some individuals and ideas within CIMIC represented deviations from this traditional military, this paper's analysis and discussion was fundamentally constructed around a classical culture definition of military culture.

## Nine

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## Appendix A

### Canadian Army Ranks and Appointments

<b>Sergeant</b>	<b>Lieutenant</b>	<b>Captain</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>LColonel</b>	<b>Colonel</b>	<b>General</b>
Section (8-12 soldiers)	Platoon (35 soldiers)		Company (125 soldiers)	Battalion (800 soldiers)		Brigade (2400-3000 soldiers)

#### **Rank**

#### **Appointment**

#### **Commissioned Officers**

Lieutenant-General	Commander Land Force Command
Major-General	Area Commander
Brigadier-General	Brigade Commander
Colonel	Area Chief of Staff
Lieutenant-Colonel	Battalion Commander
Major	Company Commander
Captain	Platoon Commander
Lieutenant	Platoon Commander

#### **Non-Commissioned Officers**

Chief Warrant Officer	Regimental Sergeant-Major
Master Warrant Officer	Company Sergeant-Major
Warrant Officer	Platoon Second-in-command
Sergeant	Section Commander

#### **Non-Commissioned Members**

Master-Corporal	
Corporal	Fully Trained Soldier
Private	Trained Soldier

## **Appendix B**

### **Glossary of Abbreviations**

AO:	Area of Operation
CAR:	Canadian Airborne Regiment
CF:	Canadian Forces
CIMIC:	Civil-Military Cooperation (or Coordination)
CMW:	Combat Masculine Warrior
DND:	Department of National Defence
IO:	International Organization
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCM:	Non-Commissioned Member
NCO:	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OOTW:	Operations Other Than War
PSYOPS:	Psychological Operations
PSO:	Peace Support Operations
RMA:	Revolution in Military Affairs
UN:	United Nations

## Appendix C

### Research Instruments

#### Research Instruments

##### Pre-training Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a study of Canadian CIMIC training by graduate student, Ruth Taronno, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology. The information gained will be used to assess and analyse the attitudes and perceptions of Canadian military personnel towards civil-military operations and to examine how formal and informal military culture may impact interactions with civilians. Please return to Ruth Taronno.

Age

Gender

Rank

Marital status - single, divorced/separated/widowed, married

Education level - grade 12 or less, high school graduate, some university/college, undergraduate degree, graduate degree

Reservist or Regular Military?

How long in the military?

Trainings other than Basic Training?

Trainings specific to CIMIC?

Country of birth

Identify with ethnic group?

How did you hear about CIMIC?

Will you be taking part in a CIMIC rotation within the next six months?

If yes, when? Which country?

Have you taken part in other overseas missions? If yes, when, where and in what capacity?

Interview Schedule One - Interview Guide for interviewing participants in the *Civil-Military Cooperation Tactical Operator's Course*

This interview is part of a study of CIMIC training by graduate student, Ruth Taronno, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology. The information gained will be used to assess and analyse the attitudes and perceptions of Canadian military personnel towards civil-military operations and to examine how formal and informal military culture may impact interactions with civilians.

1. Why are you here?
2. Why did you join the military?
3. Why did you join CIMIC?
4. How did you hear about CIMIC?
5. What does the term "CIMIC" mean to you?
6. What do you expect to learn from this training session?
7. Do you think you need to learn skills not covered by the training you have received in the military to this point? If yes, what skills?
8. What kind of attributes/skills do you think are needed for CIMIC?
9. Do you have any kind of training/skills which you think will be useful to working in CIMIC?
10. What do you know about the geographic region to which you are being deployed? Do you know the language? Religious practices?
11. In terms of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) - What do you know about them? Do you believe that you will have any problems communicating with them? Do you believe that NGOs are different from the military? What, if any, problems do you foresee working with NGOs?
12. On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate how important you think these subject areas are to CIMIC.
  - a) Non-military actors in military operations
  - b) The needs of civilian and non-combatant population in conflict and disaster
  - c) Needs assessment of a community
  - d) The media environment
  - e) Communication skills
  - f) Conflict resolution and negotiation skills
  - g) Canadian CIMIC organizations
  - h) Canadian CIMIC planning process



## Post-CIMIC Training Questionnaire - February 28 to March 11, 2005

*This questionnaire is part of a study of Canadian CIMIC training by graduate student Ruth Taronno, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology. The information gained will be used to assess and analyse the attitudes and perceptions of Canadian military personnel towards civil-military operations and to examine how formal and informal military culture may impact interactions with civilians. Please return to Ruth by 12:00 noon on Friday, February 11, 2005*

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

1) On a scale of 1 to 10 please rate how important you think these subject areas are to CIMIC operations.

- a) Non-military actors in military operations
- b) The needs of civilian and non-combatant population in conflict and disaster
- c) Needs assessment of a community
- d) The media environment
- e) Communication skills
- f) Conflict resolution and negotiation skills
- g) Canadian CIMIC organizations
- h) Canadian CIMIC planning process

2) Has your concept of CIMIC changed as a result of taking this course? If yes, briefly describe in what way.

3) Is there anything that you think should have been covered by this course, but wasn't?

4) Were you surprised by any aspect of this course? If yes, what surprised you?

5) Did you do the background readings relating to the course material? (Check one)

All (100%)

Most (75%)

Some (50 to 75%)

Few (25 to 50%)

None or almost none (0 to 25%)

6) Did you find the background readings helpful? (Check one)

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not helpful

**7) Have you taken, or will you be taking, any other course related to CIMIC such as Canadian Forces courses such as Negotiation, LOT, Milobs, NATO C47, etc.? Which ones?**