

Summer / Fall 2025

CONNECTIONS

Lest We Forget



From the desk of the President

Remembrance Day has come and gone. The cost of freedom and of democracy is not cheap. On Nov. 11th, I think not only of those who served in wars and conflicts, but also of the families who lost a son or a daughter. In my own community, one family lost two sons in World War II – what a tremendous loss for that family. A Garrison Community Remembrance Day wreath was laid at the Legion Remembrance Day parade at the cenotaph in Victoria Park. A GCC wreath was also laid at the RCR War Memorial at Wolseley Barracks.

On Thursday January 1, 2026, you are invited to the London New Year's Levee. The first recorded levee in Canada was held on January 1, 1646, in the Chateau St. Louis by the Governor of New France.

The levee has become an occasion to call upon representatives of the monarch, military and municipal governments and to exchange New Year's greetings and best wishes for the new year. It is also an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and to meet new friends.

This year, the New Year's Levee will be held at HMCS Prevost, 19 Becher St. in London. It is a great site overlooking the Thames River. The GCC is one of the sponsors (hosts) of this event. All GCC members are invited to attend. The Levee starts at 11 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m.

One of the historical libations at levees is "Moose Milk" and it will be available at HMCS Prevost. (It is quite smooth) Our new meeting location at the Grove is ideal for GCC purposes. However, the Grove requires a minimum of 25 attendees.

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BREAKING NEWS: 2025 Bursary Winners

The GCC is happy to announce the 2025 Bursary Winners.

Sgt Tess W. Yeo, 31 Sig Regiment Det, London	Pte Nathan W. J. Hicks, 31 Svc Bn, Windsor
Cpl Dylan S D Boyd, 31 CER, Waterloo	S2 Maya A. Nolan, HMCS Prevost

GCC wreath laying on 2025 Remembrance Day Ceremony at Wolseley Barracks



Pictures taken by Mike O'Leary

More pictures on page 5

From the desk of the President

Continued from page 1

Our recent attendance at the Grove has been below 25 people and as such the GCC has been called upon to make up the shortfall. Our budget does not permit this shortfall to continue indefinitely. Therefore, we encourage our members to come to the Grove to enjoy the food, the speakers and the fellowship. The cost of the meal is a reasonable \$25. You can register in advance by e-transfer to the Garrison Community Council at garrisoncommunitycouncil@gmail.com

We are required to advise the Grove of the number of members attending by 12 noon of the preceding Friday. A limited number of late registrants can be accepted. Guests are most welcome to attend our meetings. Please feel free to invite someone who may have an interest.

The GCC Executive continues to work diligently on behalf of the GCC. I thank each member of the Executive for his dedication and willingness to serve. Even the smallest project requires considerable time, planning and effort.

Within this edition you will discover two articles about Canada's purchase of fighter jets. One of the articles was composed by using Artificial Intelligence. This is our first use of an article composed with the help of AI and it is so labelled.

Tom Dean - President

The Garrison Community Council is open to any individual, or organization representative wishing to participate in any activity to raise awareness of and support for the local military community - past and present.



Every Member should be a GCCPP

(Garrison Community Council Project Person)

Who Can Participate in the GCC? All Of Us!

GCC's Mission to build a greater understanding, support and appreciation of Canada's military.

Our three fundamental tenets are
Support, Assist and Connect.

2025 GCC Executive

President	Tom Dean
Past President	Geoff Hutton
Vice President	Mike Leatham
VP Communications	Kevin Patterson
VP Bursaries	Dr. Phil Dean
VP Special Projects	Eric Thomson
VP Programming	Grant Hopcroft
Secretary	Randy Harden
Treasurer	John Martin

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Connections Editors

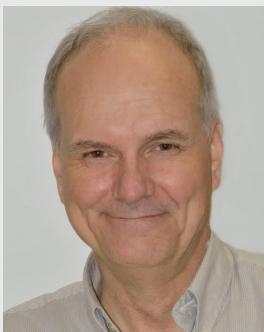
Kevin Patterson - VP Communications

Tom Dean - President and Editorial Consultant

On site photos: Eric Thomson, Randy Harden, Grant Hopcroft

Screenshots: Gary Nash, Jim Dean

GCC November General Meeting



The guest speaker for our November was Michael G. Baker. His topic was 'Commemorating the RCAF in London'.

Who are London's heroes of the air wars and how have their deeds been commemorated? Over 200 Londoners were lost during WW2 while serving in the RCAF. Learn how 427 Wing of the RCAF Association plans to bring their stories back to life at their newly named London Aviation Museum.

It was a Londoner, Vers Cronyn, a flier and veteran of two world wars, who led the way by starting the first RCAF Association Wing in Canada for veterans and their families. How has, what is now 427 Wing, kept the memory and traditions of the RCAF alive?

The Wing shares their building, a WW2 airman's canteen at the airport, with the Secrets of Radar Museum and just down the road from them is the Jet Aircraft Museum. Learn how, together, they are keeping alive the record and memory of London's air heroes.

Michael G. Baker is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario with degrees in history (1982) and education (1983).

From 1985 to 1990, he was Collections Curator at Fanshawe Pioneer Village. From 1990 to 2007, he was Curator of Regional History at Museum London. In 2007 he became Curator of the Elgin County Museum and later appointed Manager of Museums and Archives for the County of Elgin. He retired in 2024.

He is the editor of *Downtown London: Layers of Time* (1999) and the co-editor with Hilary Bates Neary, of *100 Fascinating Londoners and Street Names of London – An Illustrated Guide*, both published by James Lorimer of Canada.

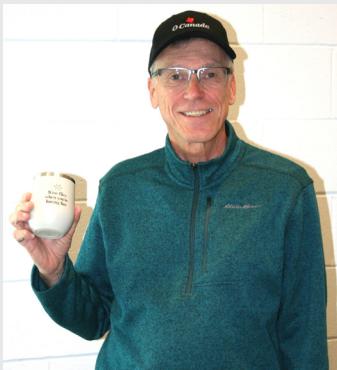
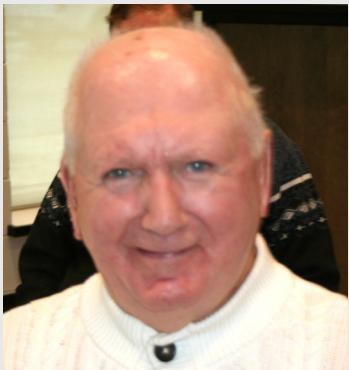
He is past president of the London Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, the Heritage London Foundation, and the Elgin Historical Society.



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GCC November General Meeting

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Commemorating London's RCAF Heroes

London Aviation Museum
A project of 427 Wing (London)
RCAF Association

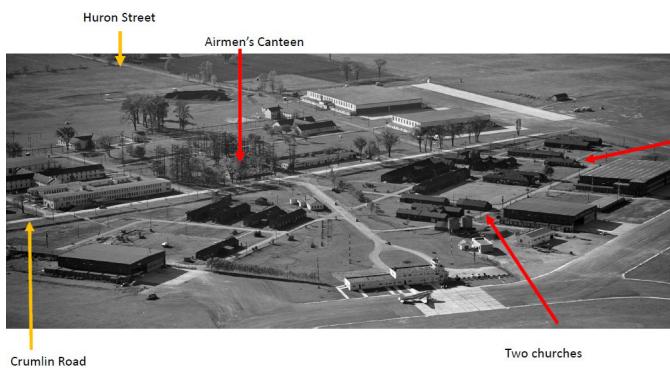


427 Wing (London) RCAF Association 2155 Crumlin Road, London

The RCAF Association

Goals:

- To advocate for a proficient and well-equipped air force.
- To support the Royal Canadian Air Cadet programme.
- To commemorate the noble achievements of the men and women who have served as members of Canada's air force since its inception.



Brothers In Arms display.



Airmen's Canteen, No 1 Bombing & Gunnery School, Jarvis, 1942.

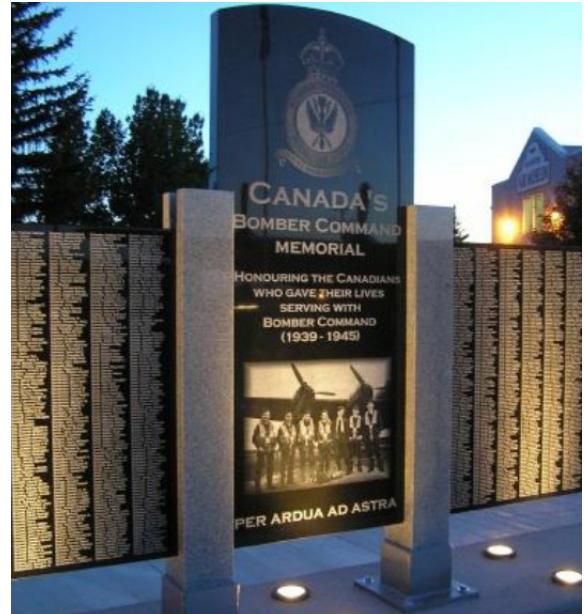
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GCC November General Meeting

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Carling Heights, looking east from Wolseley Barracks, WWI



Upcomming GCC Meetings



Wednesday January 14

Doug Wilson-Hodge,
Director Global Strategy & International Business
Development, General Dynamics Land Systems

Doug will speak about recent developments at GDLS and
Defence Procurement in Canada

Wednesday February 11

Kim Shippey,
National Director, Homes For Heroes Foundation

Kim will advise about the work of Homes for Heroes and
their plans for a facility in London Ontario

Wednesday March 11 - tbd

Wednesday April 8

Hon. David Pratt,
former Minister of National Defence will discuss the current
threats and challenges facing Canada

Remembrance Day Ceremony at Wolseley Barracks

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Pictures taken by Mike O'Leary

PM Carney Launches New Defence Investment Agency to Rebuild, Rarm, and Reinvest in the CAF



The following press-release was issued by the Department of National Defence on October 2nd:

As Canada's new government rebuilds, rearms, and reinvests in the Canadian Armed Forces, we are focused on providing the women and men in uniform with the equipment they need, when they need it. With the right tools in their arsenal, we will reinforce Canada's sovereignty, create high-paying new careers for Canadian workers, and strengthen our defence partnerships with Allies. Canada's defence procurement is currently fragmented across several departments, slow to consult industry, and too complicated to respond to rapidly evolving military needs – leaving the Canadian Armed Forces waiting years, sometimes decades for critical equipment. To protect our sovereignty and bolster our industrial capacity, the Prime Minister, Mark Carney, today announced the creation of the new Defence Investment Agency, which will overhaul and streamline Canada's defence procurement. This new agency will build domestic manufacturing and supply chains, and create new careers, so the Canadian Armed Forces have the world-class equipment they need.

First, the Defence Investment Agency will consolidate procurement processes – removing duplicative approvals and red tape, accelerating defence procurement, and providing industry with greater clarity and certainty. With a centralised process of review and approval, procurements will advance faster. Specialised staff at the agency will have expertise in defence acquisitions, ensuring focused planning and execution.

Second, the agency will tie procurement more strategically to domestic industrial benefits – creating new careers, growing our economy, and supercharging innovation in aerospace, shipbuilding, and advanced manufacturing. By leveraging defence procurement as investments in Canadian workers, companies, and technologies, the agency will help Canadian firms scale up, develop cutting-edge capabilities, and compete globally. In addition to this agency, the government will also continue to prioritise investments in dual purpose infrastructure that delivers immediate benefits for both our military and Canadians. In doing so, it will not only equip the Canadian Armed Forces with world-class tools, but also position Canada as a leader in industries critical to security and prosperity.

Third, the agency will ensure earlier engagement between the Canadian Armed Forces and Canada's defence industry, so the military can underscore operational needs, and industry can provide realistic assessments of timelines, costs, and technological options. Early engagement will also enable Canada to better anticipate future needs and build industrial capacity ahead of time, at speed and scale.

Finally, the agency will align Canada more closely with partners such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and France, who already have dedicated procurement bodies, making joint defence purchases and partnerships easier and more efficient. The new agency also positions Canada as a leader in the European Union's Readiness 2030 plan, a multilateral effort with our European allies to reinforce defence supply chains and industrial capacity among allied nations. The Defence Investment Agency will prioritise partnerships and investments to meet 2% of GDP on defence spending this year and meet NATO's 5% Defence Investment Pledge by 2035.

"In a dangerous and divided world, Canada's new government is ensuring the Canadian Armed Forces get the equipment they need, when they need it. The new agency will bolster our defence industrial capacity, create new careers, and ensure that in this new era, Canada's leadership is not defined by the strength of our values, but also by the value of our strength."

— The Rt. Hon. Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada

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PM Carney Launches New Defence Investment Agency to Rebuild, Rarm, and Reinvest in the CAF

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"This is a tremendous opportunity for partnership between government and businesses. All at once, we can drive investment, strengthen our national security, and meet our international commitments. We will bring speed and simplicity to the process of arming our military, while building Canada's industrial capacity. I am proud to have the opportunity to serve Canada at this important time."

— Doug Guzman, Chief Executive Officer, Defence Investment Agency

"Canada is rebuilding, rearming, and reinvesting in our military. The establishment of the Defence Investment Agency represents a bold step forward, ensuring that our procurement system keeps pace with today's security challenges and aligns with the ambitions of our defence strategy. This agency will drive results – accelerating timelines, strengthening partnerships, and delivering better outcomes for both our Armed Forces and our economy."

— The Hon. Joël Lightbound, Minister of Government Transformation, Public Works and Procurement

"Canada faces a new security reality that reinforces the need for the Canadian Armed Forces to be agile, well equipped, and future-ready. It is a privilege to lead the Defence Investment Agency, which will streamline procurements, unlock opportunities for Canadian industry and workers, and ensure our military is prepared to defend our sovereignty. With this new agency, our government is taking a decisive step to equip our soldiers, sailors, and aviators with the tools they need, while investing in the growth of a strong defence industrial base."

— The Hon. Stephen Fuhr, Secretary of State (Defence Procurement)

"Canada is increasing and accelerating our defence investments, delivering on our international commitments. These targeted investments in the Canadian industry will build a procurement system that meets the needs of today. The creation of the Defence Investment Agency is an important step in ensuring the Canadian Armed Forces have secure, assured, and timely access to the capabilities they need to defend Canada and support our Allies and partners."

— The Hon. David J. McGuinty, Minister of National Defence



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Honouring Indigenous Veterans



A Canadian Ranger on patrol in Nunavut in 2012.

On September 30, we recognized the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: a time to acknowledge the impact of residential schools on many Indigenous people and learn about the experiences and cultures of Indigenous Peoples.

At Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), we are committed to celebrating the military contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Veterans, while acknowledging the painful history of Indigenous people in Canada and the ongoing impacts of harm by the Canadian government.

We are taking steps to advance reconciliation and properly recognize Indigenous cultures and traditions in our activities. This includes sharing stories of Veterans like Debbie Eisan, Kenneth Bennett, Chris Innis and Tony Parsons who are the creators of the Canadian Armed Forces' sacred Eagle Staff. Their story provides a powerful look into cultural identity and reminds us that learning is vital to creating, understanding and advancing reconciliation.

Our Indigenous Veterans Engagement Team (IVET) will continue to work directly with Indigenous partners on issues related to the well-being and recognition of Indigenous Veterans.

Accessed through Salute magazine:
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/news-and-media/salute/september-2025>

GCC October General Meeting



Our guest speaker was LCol Brett Griffith CD, Commanding Officer 4th Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment.

LCol Griffiths will be presenting a brief history of the Battalion - where it came from, where it is now and where it is headed in the future.

LCol Griffiths was born and raised in a rural community north of the City of London. Enrolling in the CAF in 1990 as an NCM with 4 RCR where he reached the rank of MWO before commissioning to the rank of Capt in 2013.

LCol Griffiths held numerous positions both internal and external to the Regiment. He served with 4RCR as an infantry soldier, Section Commander,

Platoon 2IC, CQMS, RQMS, Ops WO, CSM, Adjt, OC and DCO.

LCol Griffiths deployed to Bosnia on Op Cavalier 94-95 and domestically to the ice storm of 1998. Outside of his Bn employment, LCol Griffiths has worked on a full-time basis with 4CDTC as an instructor, Standards WO, Division Standards Sergeant Major and Detachment Commander for Standards Southwestern Ontario. He served as Det Commander, 4CDSG Ops Services Southwestern Ontario from 2020-2025. Responsible for infrastructure, security, and satellite RTA function within the AO. LCol Griffiths is currently employed as the Commanding Officer of 4 RCR since October 2022. In his off hours, LCol Griffiths has been an active member of the Middlesex Centre Fire Service for 19 years where he is currently appointed as the Chief Training Officer, establishing a system of training that matches that of a full-time department including the implementation of a critical incident stress debriefing system to address the issues of operational stress injuries within the service.



Canada's Military Aircraft Purchasing Options

Analysis of Strategies and Considerations for Modernizing the Canadian Air Fleet

Introduction

Canada's vast geography, strategic alliances, and international commitments make its air force a critical component of national defence. The procurement of new military aircraft is a complex process involving considerations of capability, cost, interoperability, and domestic industry impact. This document provides an overview of the major options available to Canada for purchasing military aircraft, outlines relevant factors influencing decision-making, and discusses the implications of each approach.

Procurement Strategies

1. Direct Foreign Purchase
2. Canada may choose to purchase aircraft directly from foreign manufacturers, such as the United States, Europe, or other allied nations. This approach often ensures access to proven platforms, established supply chains, and interoperability with allies.
3. Examples include procurement of the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II fighter jets or Boeing's P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.
4. Domestic Production and Assembly
5. Canada could invest in domestic manufacturing or assembly, either by producing aircraft under license from foreign partners or developing indigenous designs. This option supports Canadian aerospace industry and creates jobs, but may involve higher costs and longer timelines.
6. Bombardier and CAE are notable Canadian aerospace companies that could contribute to such programs.
7. International Partnerships and Joint Ventures
8. Participating in multinational development projects allows Canada to share costs and technological expertise, while ensuring access to cutting-edge platforms. This approach requires long-term commitment and negotiation of industrial benefits.
9. The F-35 program is an example where Canada is a partner in development and procurement.
10. Leasing and Interim Solutions
11. Leasing aircraft or purchasing used platforms from allies can provide short-term capability while longer-term procurement decisions are finalized. This strategy is often used to address immediate operational needs or capability gaps.



Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II fighter jets



Sweden's Saab Gripen

Key Considerations

- **Capability Requirements:** Aircraft must meet the operational needs of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), including sovereignty protection, NATO interoperability, and Arctic operations.
- **Cost and Budget Constraints:** Procurement decisions are shaped by available defence budgets, lifecycle costs, and potential for cost overruns.
- **Industrial and Economic Benefits:** The government prioritizes projects that offer economic advantages to Canadian industry, including technology transfer, job creation, and regional development.
- **Political and Strategic Alliances:** Decisions may be influenced by commitments to NATO, NORAD, and bilateral relationships, particularly with the United States.
- **Timeline and Delivery:** Ensuring timely delivery and operational readiness is crucial, especially when replacing aging fleets.

Canada's Military Aircraft Purchasing Options Continued from Page 9

Current and Future Projects

Canada is currently in the process of replacing its CF-18 fighter jets with the F-35 Lightning II, selected for its advanced stealth, interoperability, and multi-role capabilities. Other ongoing projects include modernization of maritime patrol, transport, and search and rescue aircraft. Future options may consider emerging technologies such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and next-generation multi-role platforms.

Consideration of Sweden's Saab Gripen offers Canada a unique alternative in its aircraft procurement process. The Gripen is a modern, multirole fighter known for its cost-effectiveness, advanced avionics, and ease of maintenance. Adopting the Gripen could enhance Canada's operational flexibility, as the aircraft is designed to operate in challenging environments like those found across Canadian territory. Furthermore, Saab has demonstrated willingness to include significant industrial participation, allowing Canadian companies to play an active role in production and ongoing support.

This approach could foster domestic expertise while maintaining strong interoperability with NATO and allied forces.

Conclusions

Choosing the right military aircraft procurement strategy is essential for Canada's defence readiness and international commitments. Each option presents unique advantages and challenges, requiring careful balancing of capability, cost, industrial impact, and strategic alignment. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders, transparent evaluation, and adherence to Canadian values will be key to successful modernization of the RCAF fleet.

By Tom Dean

Produced with the help of AI

The Unconquered Dead

John McCrae 1872 – 1918

*Not we the conquered! Not to us the blame
Of them that flee, of them that basely yield;
Nor ours the shout of victory, the fame
Of them that vanquish in a stricken field.*

*That day of battle in the dusty heat
We lay and heard the bullets swish and sing
Like scythes amid the over-ripened wheat,
And we the harvest of their garnering.*

*Some yielded, No, not we! Not we, we swear
By these our wounds; this trench upon the hill
Where all the shell-strewn earth is seamed and bare,
Was ours to keep; and lo! we have it still.*

*We might have yielded, even we, but death
Came for our helper; like a sudden flood
The crashing darkness fell; our painful breath
We drew with gasps amid the choking blood.*

*The roar fell faint and farther off, and soon
Sank to a foolish humming in our ears,
Like crickets in the long, hot afternoon
Among the wheat fields of the olden years.*

*Before our eyes a boundless wall of red
Shot through by sudden streaks of jagged pain!
Then a slow-gathering darkness overhead
And rest came on us like a quiet rain.*

*Not we the conquered! Not to us the shame,
Who hold our earthen ramparts, nor shall cease
To hold them ever; victors we, who came
In that fierce moment to our honoured peace.*

In Flanders Fields

John McCrae 1872 – 1918

*In Flanders fields, the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*





ON TARGET: Was Canada 'Born' On Vimy Ridge?

By Scott Taylor

When Global Affairs Canada unveiled their new passport design last week, it did not take the Colonel Blimp brigade long before they realized there is no longer an image of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France included within its pages.

This omission set off howls of indignation from those who have long peddled the notion that the Battle of Vimy Ridge is where Canada was 'born' as a nation.

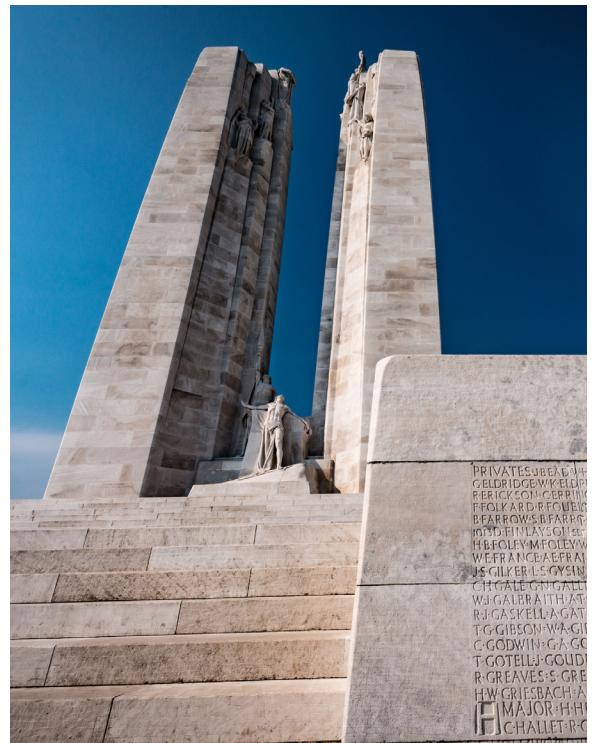
The Royal Canadian Legion tabled a letter of protest, as did the Vimy Foundation, which as the name suggests, owes its very existence to the importance bestowed upon this First World War battle.

To give them credit, the Vimy Foundation have been hugely successful in promoting the Vimy Ridge myth over the past two decades.

For legions of young Canadian students, annual class pilgrimages to the Vimy Ridge Memorial have immortalized that monument into something of a Canadian Mecca.

That said, I've never understood the logic behind isolating the Battle of Vimy Ridge as the moment in which Canada emerged as a truly independent country.

The Vimy proponents argue that this was the first time all four Canadian divisions had fought together as a single army corps, and that they successfully captured a ridge which both the British and French armies had previously tried and failed to accomplish.



The fact is that, while unified, the Canadian Corps was commanded by British General Julian Byng. Furthermore the assault at Vimy Ridge was not a singular operation, but rather a diversionary attack meant to support a much larger French offensive along the Aisne River.

From April 9 to April 12, 1917, the Canadian Corps sustained a staggering casualty toll of 3,598 dead and a further 7,004 wounded.

While the Canadians did successfully capture the ridge, the victory was not a major breakthrough, as the German Sixth army simply retreated a few kilometers to the Oppy-Mericourt line and dug in again.

The subsequent French offensive was a disastrous failure. The French losses were so staggering that the Army mutinied en masse, refusing any further attacks.

If one remains wedded to the idea that Canada came of age in a First World War battle, a more suitable choice would be Hill 70.

ON TARGET: Was Canada ‘Born’ On Vimy Ridge?

Continued from Page 11

This was fought in August 1917, just four months after Vimy Ridge, but this time the Canadian Corps was commanded by Canada’s own General Arthur Currie.

The Canadians once again achieved their objective, but with fewer casualties than at Vimy.

Some of the Vimy-as-birthplace-of-Canada supporters argue that Canada’s effort there were symbolic of the overall wartime effort which led to a more independent Dominion in the post-war era.

However, Canada’s automatic heeding of Britain’s call to arms in 1914 was a purely colonial response to what was in fact an imperial war. That we sacrificed so much to prop up and support British imperial objectives hardly signifies Canada’s independence.

For my money, Canada first cut the umbilical cord to Mother Britain during the Chanak crisis of September 1922.

For those unfamiliar with this little known chapter of our history, this began with a resurgent Turkish national army emerging out of the ashes of the recently conquered Ottoman Empire.

Under the generalship of Kemal Attaturk, the Turkish army was steadily forcing the Greek army out of Anatolia.

The British were keen to enter the fray on the side of the Greeks. However, as the British people were war-weary after the First World War, UK Prime Minister David Lloyd George put the call out for the Commonwealth Dominions to commit troops to this venture.

Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King did not immediately conform to the British request and instead insisted that any decision on going to war would be made by parliament.

In a telegram to then-Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill, King advised the British that unlike 1914, Canada’s response was no longer to be considered ‘automatic.’ This resistance from King was soon echoed by all the other Dominion leaders within the Commonwealth.

As a result, Britain had no choice but to conclude a separate agreement with Kemal Attaturk, which awarded all of Eastern Thrace to Turkey. The Greeks were forced to abandon the territory without a fight.

However, more importantly, King’s expression of independent action had a lasting impact on Canada’s status.

Historians credit Canada’s response to the Chanak incident as the genesis for British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour’s subsequent revision of the status of the Dominions within the Empire.

According to Balfour, from this point forward, the Dominions were to be “autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status and in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of the domestic or internal affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.”

Balfour’s revised formula was enacted into law in 1931 through the Statute of Westminster.

Fighting in an imperial war as a colony does not make you a nation. Saying ‘no’ to an imperial war is when we in fact came of age.

But there are no monuments to the wars we didn’t fight, so what image could be put in our passports to symbolize the 1922 Chanak Crisis?



Is Saab's Gripen winning the PR war on the Canadian fighter jet file?



By Newell Durnbrooke

Prime Minister Mark Carney has still to make the decision on what fighter jet the Royal Canadian Air Force will end up with.

Canada had planned to buy 88 U.S.-made F-35 fighter jets but Carney ordered a review of that purchase in the wake of threats against Canadian sovereignty by U.S. President Donald Trump and the trade war launched by the Americans.

In the meantime, Saab of Sweden has proposed Canada buy its Gripen fighter jet.

While the RCAF waits for the decision, both Saab and Lockheed Martin, as well as the F-35 and Gripen advocates, have been battling it out in a public relations war.

Lockheed Martin seemed to have the edge a couple of weeks ago after the CBC's David Common did a couple of TV reports on the F-35. Common went to the F-35 assembly facility in the U.S. and the result was a gushing report that, at times, seemed like a commercial for Lockheed Martin.

"CBC's David Common looks at what goes into building the F-35 and finds a surprising Canadian contribution", was how the CBC hyped the Oct. 16 report. Common then outlined that Canadian firms build parts for the F-35.

Surprising contribution? Really?

The fact that Canadian firms build parts for the F-35 has been the selling point for the RCAF and Lockheed Martin for the last 15 years. It is interesting that Common did not report that Trump

has indicated he wants all such contracts back in the U.S. in the coming years.

Common also did a profile of a Lockheed F-35 test pilot, again highly positive PR for the firm.

But Saab seems to have taken the public relations high ground in recent days. Aircraft Parts Sales

At first there were a few business articles in the Globe and Mail and other outlets about the possibility of assembling the Gripen in Canada.

Then by Nov. 14 the articles were in the Globe and on CTV News were more definite- if Canada bought the Gripen then Canada would see 10,000 manufacturing and research jobs. Bombardier and CAE, both in Quebec, as well as IMP Aerospace and Defence in Nova Scotia could be part of the deal.

"If Canada wants to create sovereign capabilities and to do their own upgrades, to build parts of it, to do final assembly and test, we are prepared to do that," SAAB President and CEO Micael Johansson told CTV. "We could do a technology transfer to Canada and support that build up."

That statement is pointedly aimed at the fact that the U.S. controls the technology upgrades to the F-35 and owns all the parts.

Is Saab's Gripen winning the PR war on the Canadian fighter jet file?

Saab's proposal would include either building a new facility or converting an existing one, with the first Canadian-made Gripen potentially flying off the assembly line within three to five years, according to CTV.

And as more enticement, Saab threw in the possibility that Gripen fighter jets for Ukraine could be assembled in Canada. "If we're going to ramp up production to support a big contract to Ukraine, we will need one or two extra hubs," Johansson said.

"It makes sense to have a big footprint in Canada together with Canadian industry, so it is absolutely a benefit for us to do that."

So, Saab was essentially signalling that it was spreading industrial benefits to two key regional areas of Canada, as well as supporting Ukraine – a particular area of interest for the Liberal government.

In addition, **Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf** and **Queen Silvia**, have to Canada to pitch the defence deal. While most Canadians likely know little about them, the trip shows that Saab is ready to pull out all the stops.

Lockheed Martin has yet to counter the latest Saab tactics. But it's not like they can count on Donald Trump to be their pitchman for the F-35 as he is pretty much universally despised in Canada.

The U.S. have also taken a different strategy on that front anyways.

The American government has threatened consequences for Canada if it doesn't go ahead of buy the F-35. Those threats have come from **Pete Hoekstra**, the much disliked U.S. ambassador to Canada.

<https://ottawacitizen.com/public-service/defence-watch/us-warns-canada-f-35-fighter-jet>

There has been some reaction to the Saab initiative from the F-35 camp.

Former Lockheed Martin test pilot Billie Flynn has countered that the Gripen is a more expensive aircraft than the F-35 when it comes to the per unit price.

"Canada's F-35 debate has devolved into anti-American theater," Flynn bemoaned. "The F-35 has become a lightning (pun intended) rod for anti-Trump, anti-everything-American sentiment."

And I wonder why that is? Could it be that the Americans are threatening to destroy Canada's sovereignty and destroy our economy? Is it because American economic actions so far have cost tens of thousands of Canadians their jobs? It is doubtful Flynn will get much sympathy by complaining about Canadian attitudes towards Americans.

But the most ironic part of Flynn's post is his questioning why the news media is "not screaming" from the rooftops about his claim that the Gripen is more expensive than the F-35. **"The media should do their homework and publish these numbers and educate the public before we get robbed on a deal that makes zero sense," he added.**

Is this the same Billie Flynn who has in the past attacked the news media and claimed they were part of an anti-F-35 conspiracy. In another recent blog post, Flynn wrote that in the fighter jet debate "Canadian journalists and pundits would serve their readers far better by stepping away from their laptops."

Now he wants them to go back to their laptops and scream from the rooftops?

Make up your mind Billie.

The other issue that Flynn neglects in his latest post about per unit aircraft cost is the long term costs of the jets. The hourly flight cost of the F-35 is \$36,000 U.S. or \$50,500 Canadian.

The hourly flight cost of the Gripen is \$7,000 U.S. or \$9,800.

Interesting figures indeed.



GCC September General Meeting



Commander Janet Lang CD, MA, Commanding Officer of HMCS Prevost joined us for our September meeting.

Commander Lang took command of HMCS Prevost on July 5th. Cdr Lang's career began in 2009 when she joined as an Intelligence Officer in the Naval Reserve at HMCS CATARAQUI. Her passion for communication led her to transition to Public Affairs in 2012, where she served as CATARAQUI's PAO until 2018.

Her career took her to Ottawa and HMCS CARLETON, where she excelled as Operations Officer for two years before becoming the Executive Officer in 2021. By 2023, Cdr Lang was appointed Occupation Advisor for Public Affairs Officers in the Naval Reserve, a role she held until 2025.

Cdr Lang's service is marked by her contributions both at home and abroad. In 2011, she volunteered for Operation LUSTRE, aiding Manitoba residents during devastating floods. Her international experience includes deploying to South Korea in 2016 as the first Canadian PAO for Exercise ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN.

She also had the honor of serving as the PAO for Team

She also had the honor of serving as the PAO for Team Canada during the 2017 Invictus Games in Toronto.

Her commitment to the Arctic saw her deploy to Resolute Bay, Nunavut, three times for Op NANOOK-NUNALIVUT. In 2020, Cdr Lang led over 200 reserve soldiers during Op LASER, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic across Eastern Ontario. Her most recent deployment was in 2024 to Exercise RIMPAC in Hawaii, where she served as the PAO on the information operations team.

Born in Montreal, Quebec, Cdr Lang pursued her undergraduate studies at the University of Waterloo and earned her master's degree from the University of New Brunswick. She is the proud mother of two adult daughters, inspiring them through her own achievements and determination.

After 25 years of service, Cdr Lang retired from the federal public service in January 2025. Outside of her professional life, she and her wife, Sandy, enjoy golfing, traveling, and cheering on their favorite sports teams.



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GCC September General Meeting

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NEP

STRUCTURED GAP YEAR

"Are you looking to take a year and figure it out? Try the Navy for a year. Get paid to see the world."

Program: Naval Experience Program (NEP)

Best for: Anyone who wants to try the Navy before committing.

Value Proposition: One year contract, no strings attached



OUTREACH

PRINCIPAL STAFF OFFICER: SSO
Outreach

OBJECTIVES

- Public engagement through:
 - Awareness building amongst Canadians
 - Building partnerships with OGDs, education institutions, associations, etc.
- Assume lead on national public outreach IAW intent expressed in the WO – NAVRES Support to Reconstitution
- Increase accuracy and relevance of data collection and analysis
 - Detailed metrics included in Annex

MAIN EFFORT

- Operationalization of RCN national outreach strategy, led by NAVRES and synchronization of efforts across the NAVRES formation.

UNCLASSIFIED

ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY – CHOOSE YOUR CAREER

FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT (Fast Track)

"Looking for a full-time career right now? We can get you in fast."

Program: Accelerated Enrolment Process (AEP)

Best for: Applicants ready to start their naval careers immediately.

Value Proposition: Full time employment in the RCN starting ASAP



Ministers of Veterans Affairs, National Defence and Public Safety mark Remembrance Day

The Honourable Jill McKnight, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, the Honourable David McGuinty, Minister of National Defence and the Honourable Gary Anandasangaree, Minister of Public Safety, issued the following statement to mark Remembrance Day:

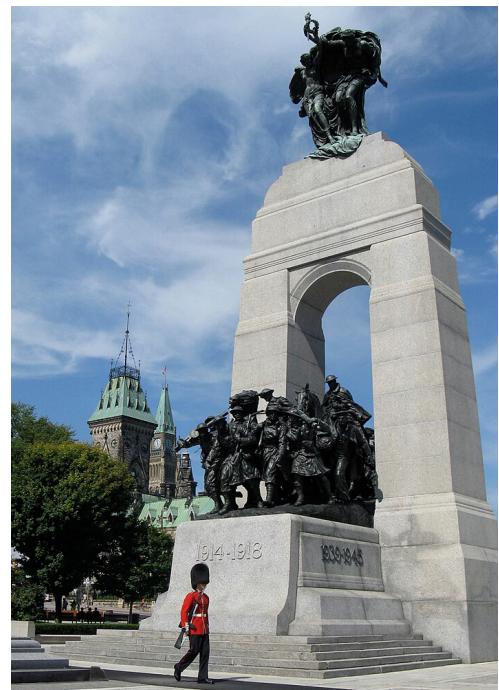
“On this Remembrance Day, we honour all Veterans and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other Canadian police services from across the country. We pause to remember the places and moments where their courage and commitment helped shape our country.

“Generations ago, our service members fought bravely in the bitter conflicts of Europe, Asia, and across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In more recent decades, the Canadian Armed Forces and police have served in military, peace support, and humanitarian operations in the Persian Gulf, the Balkans, Africa, Afghanistan, and throughout the Americas. They have safeguarded our skies, defended our shores, and stood by communities in times of crisis.

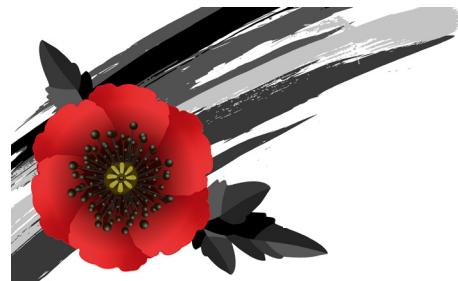
“Through every mission, they have distinguished Canada as a nation that stands ready to aid neighbours and allies in need. Veterans, CAF personnel, members of the RCMP, as well as other Canadian police embody the best of Canada: duty, courage and compassion for others.

“Today and always, we recognize the enormous sacrifices made by Canadians of every background who have worn the uniform and given their lives while serving. We honour them, we mourn them and we renew our enduring gratitude and commitment to them and their families.

“Lest we forget.”



Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Canada



Troopers from B Squadron, 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry), employed six vehicles in roles of reconnaissance, offensive and defensive operations.

Boxer Block II troop commander Lieutenant Kyle Wilkinson said while they were doing the same role as the Australian light armoured vehicle (ASLAV), the Boxer's ability to integrate more data from sensors, and sustain itself for longer, extended its reach and integration into the joint force.

“We're able to identify and engage targets at longer ranges, which assisted the scheme of manoeuvre for the combat team and the battle group,” Lieutenant Wilkinson said.

New Australian armoured vehicle a game-changer



Australian Army Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles fire rapid obscuring systems during the Boxer Block II conversion course at Puckapunyal. Story and photos by Corporal Michael Rogers.

Army's newest cavalry vehicles were put to the test during Exercise Talisman Sabre, with the first troop of Boxer Block II combat reconnaissance vehicles (CRV) deploying to Shoalwater Bay.

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New armoured vehicle a game-changer

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The troop conducted reconnaissance, clearing, blocking and raid actions, including using an uncrewed aerial system (UAS) to identify targets.



Australian Army Boxer combat reconnaissance vehicles conduct static firing during the Boxer Block II conversion course at Puckapunyal.

The Boxer CRV was introduced in 2022 under LAND 400 Phase 2 as an interim solution while the Block II systems were developed and built.

The new platform retains a similar hull and armament, but provides a turret with improved sights and sensors, making it easier for crews to land rounds on target with the first burst.

It is further supported by an integrated digital command-and-control system to provide situational awareness to the crew.

Leading up to Exercise Talisman Sabre, the troop conducted the Boxer Block II conversion course, starting with four weeks of theory and practical lessons at Gallipoli Barracks.

The course continued at Puckapunyal where drivers took the vehicles into the field to put them through their paces, as well as learning maintenance.

It finished with troop-level field training and a live-fire assessment.

Gunner Lance Corporal Peyton Fairbank said being able to shoot at longer ranges accurately with the improved sights was “unreal”.

“It’s an extra 1000m on what the ASLAV has, and because of the sighting systems, you’re still seeing it up close with zoom distances,” Lance Corporal Fairbank said.

“You can really hone in and see where your rounds are landing. It gives you a better sense that you’re getting rounds on first burst.”

Lance Corporal Fairbank said a bigger bang from the 30mm automatic cannon and the ability to fire kinetic energy timed fuse (KETF) rounds were a big improvement on the ASLAV.



Rounds fired by the Boxer 30mm automatic cannon, left, and the Australia Light Armoured Vehicle 25mm chain gun, right.

KETF is an airburst munition that uses a programmable fuse to detonate projectiles at a precise distance near the target.

To help gunners find their mark, crew commanders use a 360-degree panoramic camera that allows them to scan the battlefield and assign targets, independently of the turret.

For crew commander Corporal Rhyley Hinds, it allowed extra command and control in dynamic combat situations.

“Before, you had to be hatch up, use the hand controller and point the turret in the general direction of the target so the gunner can see,” Corporal Hinds said.

“Now you can be hatch down, looking through your own sight while the gunner is searching for targets, press assign target and the turret will slew to where you’re pointing.

“You can supervise and the gunner can continue to fight the engagement while you look for more targets.”

Lieutenant Wilkinson said the Boxer’s ability to integrate new systems would future-proof the vehicle.

“I was sceptical going into the Block II, but having done the course and Exercise Talisman Sabre, I’d say the Block II Boxer is definitely the right direction for cavalry to go,” he said.

“It’s a vast improvement in mobility, protection and fire power, as well as network communication, which are the four characteristics we look at for armoured fighting vehicles.”

ON TARGET: Military Mobilization Plan: The CDS Reverses Course



By Scott Taylor

The latest media crap-storm to hit the Canadian Armed Forces is clearly the responsibility of the very senior leadership tasked with steering Canada's military institution away from such pitfalls.

It started with a startling headline in the October 31 edition of the Ottawa Citizen. "Canadian Military wants mobilization plan in place to boost reserves to 400,000 personnel".

The initial story was based on an internal document issued on May 30, 2025 which established a top level 'tiger team' to create a Defence Mobilization Plan (DMP) with the goal of increasing the primary reserves from 23,561 to 100,000 personnel and ballooning the current 4,384 souls listed on the Supplementary Reserve list to a staggering 300,000. This plan had been hatched by none other than Chief of Defence Staff, General Jennie Carignan and the Department of National Defence (DND) Deputy Minister Stefanie Beck.

The details were scant in the Ottawa Citizen's first story and I wrote a commentary to the effect that the CAF are currently woefully understrength at present and according to the latest Auditor General's report, they cannot properly house those still in uniform.

However, since that juncture more details of the DMP were made public by Ottawa Citizen reporter David Pugliese who had obtained a full copy of the unclassified, nine page DMP document. The second Citizen headline read "Canadian Military will rely on an army of public servants to boost ranks by 300,000".

Naturally this served to scare the bejeezus out of the legion of Ottawa based public servants as they read their newspaper at the breakfast table.

For those martial minded Canadians who would welcome the notion of employing mandatory service to boost the ranks of the CAF, worse news was to follow. The Citizen story revealed that new recruits for the supplementary reserve would be given a one-week training course in how to handle firearms, drive trucks and fly drones.

After their initial entry into the supplementary ranks, these new recruits would be required to do one week's worth of military training each year, but would not be issued uniforms. Medical coverage would be provided for their annual military service, but that time would not count towards their public service pensions, according to the DMP.

For those not familiar with the terms 'Primary' and 'Supplementary Reserves' those in the Primary reserve are enrolled in active units and conduct part time training on a year-round basis. Traditionally the Supplementary Reserve was a list of former regular and reserve personnel who pledged to return to duty in the case of a war or national emergency. Sadly, due to post Cold War administrative neglect that Supplementary Reserve list stands today at just 4,384 veterans willing to return to serve.

Just to clarify the point, in the past, all of those considered a 'reservist' would have obtained actual experience and training in a military occupation. What this latest proposal calls for is for nearly 75,000 additional primary reserve personnel plus nearly 300,000 one-week-Supplementary-reserve-wonders, without uniforms.

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ON TARGET: Military Mobilization Plan: The CDS Reverses Course

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Furthermore, the DMP document clearly states, “The entry criteria for the Supplementary or other Reserve should be less restrictive than the Reserve Force for age limits as well as physical and fitness requirements.”

So I’m guessing they are not looking to recruit elite warriors to this new force.

For a direct comparison, the Canadian Corps of Commissionaires has a one week (40 hours) entry level training course to graduate a basic security guard. However, as the Corps of Commissionaires are the largest employer of Canadian veterans in Canada, this nationwide legion of security guards would still have more collective military experience than the currently proposed one-week-wonder Supplementary Reservists. Plus, the Commissionaires supply their personnel with full uniforms.

But I digress. In response to the details of the DMP being published in the Citizen, military themed social media platforms exploded with a barrage of commentary filled with ridicule and incredulity towards the CAF leadership.

Other media outlets picked up the story and during a CTV television interview on Remembrance Day, General Carignan told host Omar Sachedina that her DMP plan was “not focused directly to public servants. Our public servants are already contributing extensively to the work we are doing in defence”. Carignan then went even further by claiming that the Ottawa Citizen articles about her mobilization scheme “are not quite correct.”

In response, the Ottawa Citizen subsequently called Carignan’s bluff. They published the exact quote from the DMP complete with a screen shot of the original document which she had co-authored. “It [the DMP] should initially prioritize volunteer public servants at the federal and provincial/territorial level.” wrote Carignan.

When asked by Citizen reporter David Pugliese to clarify which of his stories facts were not accurate, Canada’s top soldier declined to give additional comment.

General Carignan’s deflective response to CTV did not surprise Colonel (ret’d) Brett Boudreau a former senior public affairs officer at DND. Boudreau told the Citizen, “The gut instinct, still, of most senior CAF leaders is to blame everyone but themselves, usually to scapegoat the media, for military-related coverage they do not like, for whatever reason, even if embarrassment is well and truly deserved,” he said.

“It’s a curious feature of, and sad commentary about, a seriously dated institutional mindset toward the public communications function.”

One has to wonder what sort of advice General Carignan is getting from her current legion of public affairs experts. It should have been evident from the very first Citizen story that Pugliese had obtained a hard copy of the internal document from which he was quoting.

To try and deny or diminish your own comments once they have been ridiculed in public is not good leadership.

Especially when a reporter like Pugliese is only going to come back at you armed with the receipts.

As for the original plan itself, the question begs: Did we learn nothing from our experience in Afghanistan? We helped create an Afghan Security force of nearly 400,000 poorly trained, unmotivated individuals who at least had uniforms. However, when the balloon went up the whole Afghan security force simply evaporated.

I hate to think of what would happen in a scenario where Canada had to go to war with a military reserve force of 300,000 public servants, who only had one week of training, and no uniforms.

