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Somalia Affair offered distorted picture of Canadian armed forces
For their professionalism, soldiers in former Yugoslavia awarded first UN commendation

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Contact: Mike Bechthold
Managing Editor, *Canadian Military History*
(519) 884-0710, ext. 4594

or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710, ext. 3070

WATERLOO – Fed by intense media coverage of a young man's murder by Canadian paratroopers, the public's perception following the Somalia Affair was that the Canadian Forces were "poorly trained, incompetently led, badly equipped, and quite often racist." In the current issue of *Canadian Military History*, Lee Windsor argues that other military activity of the time, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, more accurately represents the nation's military in the early 1990s.

A PhD student at the University of New Brunswick (UNB), Windsor closely examines the implementation of a ceasefire agreement in Croatia's Medak Pocket in 1993 and describes a Canadian contingent forced to move back and forth between peacekeeping and deadly combat. Throughout the mission, Canadian troops in Croatia exercised a full range of capabilities – including fortification construction, marksmanship, mechanized combat, negotiation and basic investigation – and professionally dealt with people who had attempted to kill them. .

"Examination of this Canadian mission [to the Balkans] contrasts with the Somalia Commission's findings about poor leadership and training," says Windsor. "Contrary to the findings of the Somalia Inquiry, the Canadian Army in 1993 contained dedicated, skilled, and well-disciplined professional soldiers."

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As a testament to its professionalism in Croatia, the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was awarded the United Nations Force Commander's Commendation – the first of its kind and one of only three awarded in the UN Protection Force's history.

Guest edited by Marc Milner, director of UNB's military and strategic studies program, this issue of *Canadian Military History* also includes:

- An account of how a network of friendships was used to bypass the regular chain of command during a secret investigation into the state of equipment on Canadian warships. Conducted for the Minister of National Defence, the 1943 investigation relied on comments from a group of influential reserve officers and authorities in the Royal Canadian Navy, and eventually uncovered a politically important "equipment crisis."
- The story of how the Canadian Navy's only peacetime loss of a ship, the HMCS *Thiepval*, led to the creation of a popular historic and sport-diving site off the British Columbia coast.
- An in-depth look at the development of Canada's navy after the First World War and the fate of the three ships – the HMCS *Aurora*, *Patrician* and *Patriot* – which fit the federal government's needs and budget of the time.
- A personal recollection of the intense fighting around St. Lambert-sur-Dives during the closing stages of the Battle of Normandy, August 1944. Arthur Bridge's account is not heroic, but gives a participant's view of the sheer terror, uncertainty and horror of combat.

Canadian Military History is published quarterly by the Laurier Centre for Military Strategic and Disarmament Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. The Centre, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian War Museum fund the journal jointly. Each issue has a circulation of over 1300 copies.

To get a review copy of *Canadian Military History*, members of the media can contact Mike Bechthold at mbechtho@wlu.ca or 519-884-0710 ext. 4594.