

EDITOR'S NOTE

With this issue, *Canadian Military Journal* begins its second year of publication. A first anniversary is, of course, a very modest milestone, but, as everyone who has been involved in a new venture knows, the start-up period is always the most difficult. We believe the *Journal* has made a respectable beginning, and the staff is looking forward confidently to an even better second year. It is thus an appropriate time to extend sincere thanks to all who have given support to the *Journal* in its first year by contributing articles, letters and reviews, and by providing advice and constructive criticism.

It is perhaps also an appropriate time to remind our readers that, if this quarterly is to serve effectively as the professional journal of the Canadian Forces, greater participation is needed in the discussion of the ideas and issues affecting Canadian security and defence. We are very much aware that there continues to be a certain reticence among serving members of the Forces and departmental public servants about expressing their views and opinions in a public forum. Perhaps it may help to remind readers that, in the first issue of the *Journal*, the Minister of National Defence stated clearly, "I encourage members of the Forces and Departmental staff to participate ... by writing articles that will stimulate original and innovative thinking about the challenges confronting the military profession at the beginning of the new millennium." In that same issue, the Chief of the Defence Staff noted that DND regulations and orders were being amended to permit the expression of informed personal views and opinions. General Baril wrote, "While these amendments have not yet been published, I want to assure members of the Forces and Departmental public servants that the Deputy Minister and I approve of the open discussion of issues and ideas in this *Journal*."

There are a broad range of important topics that ought to be discussed in these pages, some looking far into the future, others focused on contemporary practice or policy. Among these would be an examination of where the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs might be leading in terms of future structure, capabilities and roles. If there must be greater emphasis on expensive, 'hi-tech' weaponry and sensors for possible future operations, what capabilities will have to be given up to make that affordable? Is the impetus to remain 'interoperable' with US forces compatible with concepts that would limit the involvement of our forces to low to mid-intensity conflict? Are obsolescent capabilities being maintained simply because of the perceived influence of Cold War-era 'tribes'? Then, for example, there are the very real personnel issues such as the effects of a high operational tempo on training standards, on military families, and on retention. These, and a host of other issues and problems need to be seriously addressed. We also know that most members of the Forces and Departmental staffs are far too busy to write lengthy, scholarly articles even if they have interesting views and insights.

To encourage the 'far too busy' to express their views without having to write a twenty-page manuscript, the *Journal* is inviting the submission of short opinion pieces, 500 to 1000 words, on any topic that seizes the writer's fancy. In this way, we hope we can stimulate serious discussion of some of the vital issues. Please join in. And, while you are at your computer, send us an e-mail to let us know whether or not the *Journal* is meeting your needs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Journalist David Pugliese may have been disappointed "... to read LCol Brett Boudreau's all-encompassing attack on the Access to Information Act (ATI) [Vol.1, No. 2] and those members of the public who use it" [Letters to the Editor, Autumn 2000], but I think it is more disappointing for the public he professes to serve to have watched what has happened to the general quality of media coverage as journalists increasingly use the crutch of ATI to prop up otherwise shaky reporting.

ATI has become the lazy journalist's panacea for generating copy. There's no need to cultivate live, front-line sources and conduct actual interviews anymore. When a deadline looms, just fill the coffeepot and then sit down and second-guess some old ATI data for a few hours. Inject some personal opinion and inflammatory language, round it off with a couple of predictable quotes from biased sources, and you've got public information dressed up in an article that poses as breaking news. What is equally disturbing is that indiscriminating editors condone these ATI witch-hunts and pass the results off to readers as 'investigative journalism'.

Is ATI a necessary element to help ensure an open and free society? Without a doubt. Does the current

Canadian ATI act need revision? The sooner, the better. I think that most Canadians would agree that, law of the land or not, the spirit of the act is violated every time it is used as a convenient and publicly-funded Coles Notes for muckrakers.

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