

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPERATION ASSURANCE: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

I read the article by Dr. Hennessy with more than just passing interest as I was involved in Operation ASSURANCE and came within sixteen hours of being deployed. Although I have neither the expertise nor the personal knowledge to comment on the strategic elements that came into play, I can give a perspective of someone 'in the weeds' as it were.

I volunteered for the operation the same day the tasking order came down. Like many others at NDHQ, we reported on a Saturday for rushed processing. Everything and everyone seemed to be going at warp speed to get us to Kingston. Once there, the waiting began. As the weeks dragged on our numbers dropped. Successive cuts brought our numbers down from 160 to about 40. I watched motivated, eager officers and NCMs almost break down after being told they'd been chopped. One young officer had paid for her mother to fly from one coast to the other to take care of a young child. I watched this person try to deal with the emotional upheaval when told to go home. The mental roller coaster of being told you made the cut, then being told just a few days later to pack your bags, was a terrible experience.

As this was going on, we watched our elected leaders waver and show indecisiveness. I clearly remember seeing a picture from Stuttgart showing Canadian military planners. Seven 'stars' were in this one picture. Perhaps all this expertise was needed, but the opinions voiced by more than one person that day was that this was out of line for the size of our commitment. There appeared, at least to the people at our end, to be far too many staff officers involved at all levels. Remember the old saw about "too many cooks" or "tell me what you want but not how to do it"?

In the end, the survivors who had outlasted the cuts were told sixteen hours before flight time that the mission was cancelled. For many reasons, the major one being the "Bungle in the Jungle", I decided to leave the

Forces two months later. I was proud of what my fellows and I had done, but unfortunately, I can't say the same for our leadership, military or civilian. The first principle of war is 'Selection and maintenance of the aim'. There, the aim was ambiguous and was not maintained.

Captain (ret'd) Pierre Lamy
Ottawa

KOREA CASUALTIES

I was most unhappy to note Frank McGuire's approach to comrades who fell during the Korean War. [Letters to the Editor, Autumn 2000 issue] He seems to pigeon-hole loss of life according to manner of death, as was done in John Melady's book, *Korea: Canada's Forgotten War*, where those killed in action are indicated by an asterisk and the next of kin of the remainder are left to wonder what might have happened.

I served as a platoon sergeant with the Patricias for two tours in Korea. During that time, I had occasion to take two of my soldiers out of the line and send them to our rear echelon, both within a few days of completing their tour and rotation to Canada, a precaution I exercised to ensure their safe return home. Tragically, a fire broke out in the echelon lines, and both of these lads burned to death.

If McGuire believes these boys, along with many others, are not entitled to the same respect or to be considered as 'fallen soldiers', he is totally wrong. Each and every one of those who died in Korea did so serving Canada and upholding the United Nations mandate. McGuire ought to acknowledge this plain fact, the more so since he once served in my Regiment. I do not believe First or Second World War casualties were treated in this manner.

Edward Hansen
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EDITOR'S NOTE

In the Spring 2001 edition, the *Journal* published a Letter to the Editor which was critical of the manner in which some journalists use Access to Information regulations. The decision to print the letter was made on the basis that it gave expression to a point of view held by some members of the Canadian Forces that ATI requests are sometimes abused. Several readers have, however, pointed out that the letter could be viewed as being a personal attack on journalist David Pugliese, whose name was mentioned in the first paragraph. The Editor


would like to make it clear that he did not in any way intend the letter to be interpreted in that sense, and he would like to apologize to Mr. Pugliese for any perception that the *Journal* questioned his journalistic integrity or his work.

The Editor repeats his call for short — 500 to 1000 word — opinion pieces that might engage our readers in a discussion of the many important issues affecting the Forces today and in the future. Stand up and be heard.

Edited by Bernd Horn and Stephen J. Harris

GENERALSHIP *and the* ART *of the* ADMIRAL

PERSPECTIVES ON CANADIAN SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP



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