



# *The Frontenau Times*

In memory of *The Wipers Times*, with apologies to Captain F.J. Roberts,  
12<sup>th</sup> Bn, Sherwood Foresters

Vol 2. No. 10

Tuesday, 20th March, 2001

Price: Two chocolate bars and a shot of scotch

## **GRANOVIAN WAR ENDS TCSC STUDENTS DECLARE VICTORY ON MORAL PLANE**

### **Editorial Comment**

**"I am Locutus of Borg. Resistance is futile.  
You will be assimilated."**

If quickly became obvious to the astute that this was no ordinary group of CSC candidates. They were more mature, calmer and less self-absorbed than the usual run-of-the-mill mix. Almost noticeably absent was the usual quota of biting, scratching, knife-wielding careerists, fighting to claw their way to the top over their own peers.

As the current CSC course goes forth into the world, are they expected to be fruitful and multiply, or merely to maintain a status quo? After so much talk of the importance of education (or intellectualism, divested of the education argument, depending on who you talk to), we have been subjected to a focus, not on the mental processes of command, leadership and decision-making, but on the structured requirements to produce publication quality documents, forms and products in strict hierarchical precedence.

The Socratic learning method can be a valuable opportunity to share ideas, conceptualize and

to cross-pollinate points of view from assorted disciplines – or it can be just a directed exercise in futility, repackaging and re quoting the same documents over and over until the pink sheets have been parroted.

A proven methodology you might argue, used successfully for countless serials of the Command and Staff Course. But successful by what measure, the same zero-defect evaluation that, places “no-one got hurt” before “someone learned” as a success criteria for training. Now I certainly do not espouse casualty rates in training, but when risk avoidance is acceptable even when it undermines training objectives, then we really have a fundamental problem in addressing the needs of our profession.

But let’s bring the focus of our discourse back to the pointy end (OK, it’s staff training and perhaps it is only the pointy end of a Staedtler). But, the essence of the question remains, why *has* the current course rejected the status quo so strongly? What’s wrong with this bunch? The hell with tigers, what happened to the gorillas?

I’ve mulled it over time and again, that remark from a tutorial interview (paraphrased, of course): “You contribute the necessary observations, but you don’t challenge your peers.” And the unspoken response hovers; “So you want me to be contributing the same information, but you want me to be confrontational in doing so?” And the more I think about it the more I have come to believe that the problem comes not from our (the students’) behaviour, but from your (the DS’) expectations. Presenting a generally more mature and pragmatic outlook on our careers and professions, the dislocation the staff felt was caused by failing to find the expected group dynamic. And in doing so, assuming that we were the problem.

Let’s be realistic, shall we? We’re the “B Team.” The “A Team” (which is functionally an oxymoronic designation); the streamers, the golden chosen, the carefully cultivated careerists all living in their zero-defect world, *they* were all on the last course. That course was loaded before the ten-week CSC option was presented and the next CSC graduation after December 2000 was still expected to be June 2002. Every candidate with a career agenda stapled to their 490A since they were Lieutenants was rushed into that breach so that their next promotion deadline would not be missed.

And then the world fell apart. Army staff training was “fixed” again (that’s the handyman’s mission verb, not the tactical verb – hmmm, or is it?) and the TCSC was exposed to the world. It would be

used, firstly, to complete the training of those sorry things with only the LFSC. Every Captain would get it. The pressure was now off the Career Managers, and the list could be, and to an extent, was filled alphabetically by availability.

This combination of coincidence created a unique situation probably for the first and only time in the existence of Canadian Army Command and Staff training. The College found itself with a historically, and extremely, out of proportional sub-set of the course were the workers among us. The ones who form the backdrop for the streamers to measure their rate of advancement against, the ones who get where they’re going by dedication and effort, accepting tough assignments because they’ve proven that they’re good at their professions. Neither expecting nor granted protection, proud to reflect on the jobs they’ve had, which can never simply considered lists of appointments.

And, collectively, we were so far from the expected *norm* in our group dynamic that the staff never realized what they were dealing with. When the syndicate discussion is actually more mature than a House of Commons debate, the DS are dislocated – “where’s the usual group dynamic?” is the underlying question. “What’s wrong?,” what’s broken?,” you may find yourself asking. Well, the truth is; nothing’s wrong, it’s not broken. The truth is, it’s probably as close to being fixed as any of us have ever seen

We’re here because we believe in Canada, and in the value of a professional Army as a national institution. We place soldiers and soldiering (in all its guises through our chosen MOCs) before personal advancement. We’re willing to accept the pain of facing the Army’s problems, and we’re tired of people asking why we’re still “in” after they see we actually have skills. We’re the Captain and Majors – perhaps never to be Colonels, but we accepted that a long time ago. We’re not just oarsmen in the galley, we’re the carpenters and sail-makers, helping to keep the vessel afloat without ever being pointed out as the guy in charge.

We’re the ones who have gotten tired of hearing; “If you don’t like it [the Army] you can leave.” We may not be happy with everything about the Army, but we’re still here because we are the ones who are willing to set the conditions for future success. We’re not here because we know we’re guaranteed our next promotion, we’re here because we believe in what we’re doing. We don’t need an ethical code explained to us, we just need one demonstrated to us by example.

**Quotes:**

DS: "How do I get a General Lee Bowie Knife?"

Student: "It has to be awarded by a peer."

OPP Products: "One way to make them better is to actually read them"

"Can we wait an hour before we issue that, I don't want to countermand my orders twice."

"Wargaming ... a voodoo art and everyone has their witch doctor with a bone in his nose."

"You guys [as a div staff] are two days old."

The busted OODA Loop: "... he's at the door ... give me a COA for that!"

Exercise Time versus Real Time: "Happy Hour! ... what time is it!?!"

You know the drinking after Final Drive started too early when you hear: "As long as it doesn't involve anal penetration, I'll try it."

RE: Reiffenstein: "That guy's a walking quote"

RE: Patrick: "He's the king of the one-liner."

RCR Maj: "If you don't quote me in the *Frontenac Times*, I'll never talk to you again."

"13 CRAB"

COA 1 – Column of Brigades: "Why, after this course and the Staff Course, you would make a plan like that. That's the real question."

"I hear you're the 10-week wonders."

OPP in NDHQ: "That's not reality, remember the OPP is just a guide."

"We are risk-averse."

Digitization of the Battlefield & Situational Awareness: "You take away the ambiguity on the battlefield and it increases the warrior ethos."

**Ornithology:**

Official Mascot of the College:

Minerva, the Owl of Knowledge

Unofficial Mascot of TCSC 01:

Fighting (the) Cock, the rooster of rational professionalism.



*The Frontenac Times Advice Column*

**Dear Suppenführer**

**Dear Suppenführer:** Whenever I command a division I always manage to murder a brigade, why is that?

**Signed:** MGen (WSE) Gelhead.

**Dear Jelly-brain:** One more time, now pay attention . . . SELECTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE AIM. A lack of planning leads to chaos, chaos leads to failure. The aim of OPP is to speed your decision-action cycle and to climb inside of the enemy's. Crawling into your own OODA loop serves no value whatsoever. Let me ask you one question: Do you burn a Christmas tree one foot at a time?

**Dear Suppenführer:** Although I proved myself during Exercise FINAL DRIVE, my peers fail to bask in the radiance of my brilliance, why?

**Signed:** Some really loud, nut scratching PPCLI captain.

**Dear Itchy:** Do you people not listen . . . ECOMONY OF EFFORT. Lets compare you to a chemical attack - nobody likes a persistent nerve agent. P.S. Learn to bone your G3 you loser!

**Dear Suppenführer:** Why do the DST and synch-matrix not work for me?

**Signed:** Perseverance.

**Dear Strathcona.** Have you tried reading them?

***Arbeit macht Frei***

## Shaping a Generation

by: **GUEST EDITORIALIST**

Between the LFSC and TCSC we have spent a great deal of time considering leadership and the role of the leader. We have held boisterous discussions over ethical issues and waxed philosophical over the grammar used in the definitions of command and control. These pursuits have all been entertaining and arguably hold value for our professional development, but lets do something intellectually fun for a change. SDI Question 1: “How would one go about instilling mediocrity in an Army? Be prepared to defend your views.”

Many approaches could be taken. Shrinking resources while increasing operational requirements is a good one. This would arguably make the organization as a whole focus more and more on the minimum acceptable level of performance and is sure in the long run to turn some off from pursuing high expectations which they know can not be met. Alternatively a streamed promotion system based more on people’s relationships with their superiors rather than demonstrable performance. However these are both largely passive approaches to the problem, and hold the danger that a core of integrity, discipline and responsibility may remain. “How would you *actively* promote such a decline? – focus on the Officer Corps in your answer.”

If you want to influence the entire Officer Corps you need a gate or hoop through which young officers must pass during which they can be properly effused with an acceptance of mediocrity (yes again, take five apes...). So develop an institution through which all aspiring Army Officers must pass – 100% attendance is a good goal, if resource intensive.

Flood your target audience with too much information to learn at any but the most superficial level while insisting that they must understand it all thoroughly, then grudgingly accept their bumbling efforts as “as good as we can expect”. Avoid positive feedback as counter productive. Strenuously avoid presenting anything concrete that could be considered an acceptable solution. In the short term presenting solutions after the fact can embarrass or daunt some, however in the long term it can introduce the idea of achievable goals, “right” solutions which can indeed be learned and goal setting, all of which work against the ultimate aim. Lastly, establish an assessment system that further supports this atmosphere of inevitable failure. The vast majority of your target audience should, regardless of aptitude or effort, achieve the

same result. This will clearly establish in their minds that they are intellectually and professionally in the herd – and that’s an acceptable place to be. A few may be acknowledged as somewhat better than average without damaging the plan – in fact this will encourage those of the next generation with initiative and high standards (the truly dangerous) to try their skills against the machine, with inevitable results.

And finally no process is complete without a manner of validating the results. Within the structure of the institution you can be sure you’re on your way to achieving critical mass when the students on-mass determine “That it doesn’t really matter. I’m just here to get a check in the box.”. Once this generation of officers has tacitly accepted that the highest level of training most of them will receive in the Army is meaningless but acceptable and normal for the organization you’re well on your way – the apes are ready to go off and influence other apes.

Within the Army as a whole how could this process be gauged? A general atmosphere of neglect and acceptance of low expectations and standards is the aim, yet difficult to measure. Scandals are probably the best litmus test as they indicate that problems are either being hidden/ignored or blooming quickly, and are not being corrected by leadership – no matter how well meaning any individual. Key indicators of success: preference to present the situation as desired by superiors rather than reality, failures of moral courage, failures to accept responsibility for oneself and that inherent in command.

Of course this is all just an intellectual exercise in problem solving.....Tam Marte Quam Minerva.

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