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Major-General Roger Rowley and the Failure of Military Reform, 1958-1969

PETER KASURAK

Abstract: Many consider the pre-Unification Canadian Army to have achieved the apogee of professionalism, but long-term progress did not result. Major-General Roger Rowley led three major reforms of the Canadian Army and the Canadian Forces during the 1958-1969 period: the reform of the Canadian Army Staff College, the restructuring of the Army through the Army Tactics and Organization Board and the reform of the military profession and officer development through the Officer Development Board. The failure of Rowley's initiatives reveals the limits of knowledge-based professionalism, collegial decision making and the development of a national strategic perspective in the armed forces of the 1960s and 1970s.

“REFORM” IS NOT A SUBJECT subject that occurs to many historians when thinking of the early Cold War Canadian Army. According to the consensus view of Canadian historians, the 1945 to 1968 period was the height of Army professionalism. Jack Granatstein in fact titles his chapter on this period in *Canada's Army* “The Professional Army.” He says it was “the golden age of Canadian military professionalism” and praises its efficiency, the creation of a “true General Staff” and Army Headquarters as a “centre for policy and planning.” In *The Administration of Defence Policy in Canada*, Douglas Bland opposes the golden “Command Era” of 1946 to 1964 with the rather leaden “Management Era” which followed. John A. English calls the army that emerged from the Second World

War “the best little army in the world” and the immediate post-war period “the flowering of professionalism.”¹

There is substantial evidence to support this point of view. The Army had established the Canadian Army Staff College in 1946 and was moving away from its dependence on the British Army. It was meeting the emerging challenge of tactical nuclear war by expanding its use of operations research and through the establishment of a combat development function.² Yet all was not well. Internally, elements of the Canadian Army’s British inheritance created challenges to modernisation. Externally, the disruption of Paul Hellyer’s integration and unification of armed services redirected or cancelled single service reforms. Progressives would fail to create an army based on professional knowledge and one which would be a strong contributor to the development of national strategy.

Internal difficulties had their origin in the British Army heritage of the Canadian Army. While part of an imperial army it had never had to develop policy or doctrine on its own and its first attempts in the post-war period were far from successful. Initial efforts to develop national doctrine were impaired by the British Army culture shared by the Canadian Army. The British Army itself had failed to implement a successful doctrine for mechanised war and relied on commanders of divisions and higher formations to muddle through based on their own innate genius and intuition. This was combined with authoritarian leadership that stripped junior levels of initiative.³ Battlefield success imprinted these traits on the post-war Canadian Army. The 1955-56 Exercise Gold Rush exemplified this leadership

¹ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada’s Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 341-42; Douglas Bland, *The Administration of Defence Policy in Canada, 1947-1985* (Kingston: Ronald P. Frye & Company, 1987), 1-12; and John A. English, *Lament for an Army: The Decline of Canadian Military Professionalism* (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 1998), 46-50.

² Howard G. Coombs, “In Search of Minerva’s Owl: Canada’s Army and Staff Education (1946-1995)” (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen’s University, 2010); Andrew B. Godefroy, *In Peace Prepared: Innovation and Adaptation in Canada’s Cold War Army* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014); and Sean M. Maloney, *An Identifiable Cult: The Evolution of Combat Development in the Canadian Army, 1946-1965, Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts Report 9905* (Kingston: Department of National Defence, 1999).

³ David French, *Raising Churchill’s Army: The British Army and the War against Germany, 1919-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21-22, 201, 278-80; and David French, “Doctrine and Organization in the British Army, 1919-1932” *The Historical Journal* 44, 2 (2001): 514-15.

style. Gold Rush was Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Guy Simonds' attempt to develop doctrine for tactical nuclear war. Determined that supply up to division be done by "flying truck" STOL aircraft, Simonds overruled both his scientific advisor and study director when they raised practical, technological difficulties. He simply dictated the tactical concept to the team. In true British Army fashion, the next CGS, Howard Graham, ditched Gold Rush and replaced it with his own incompatible concept. A similar story of senior officer *diktat* and staff advice ignored can be seen in the Army's attempt to develop an armoured personnel carrier, the Bobcat. Unable to pass a technical evaluation and costing twice as much as the American M113, it was eventually abandoned.⁴

Bernd Horn and Bill Bentley suggest that the simplicity of Cold War alliance strategy and routinisation of defence tasks was debilitating. In their opinion it was the conventional North American Treaty Organization (NATO) warfighting framework that "nurtured a system that relied on the traditional military concept that leadership is a top-down hierarchical action that depends on unit command and staff appointments, specifically experience, as the mechanism to prepare individuals for higher command at the strategic level." Within this model, education was not important and a hierarchical "industrial age" leadership culture with a directive and authoritarian approach predominated.⁵ Douglas Bland, though viewing what he calls "the Command Era" more favourably, notes that it was marked by "command authority, military concepts for decision-making and administration, ... and a reliance on subjectivity based on experience."⁶

Equally regressive was the inherited British Army preference for officership based on character rather than professional knowledge. In the early post-war period General Charles Foulkes, the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, advocated for a degreed officer corps, recruiting officers from civilian universities and then sending

⁴ Peter Kasurak, *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 29-34; and Peter Kasurak, *Canada's Mechanized Infantry: The Evolution of a Combat Arm, 1920-2012* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 87-109. Godefroy excuses Simonds leadership style by saying that "institutional inertia within the army was often strong" and that it took strong means to "overcome these traditional obstacles" (Godefroy, *In Peace Prepared*, 127).

⁵ Bernd Horn and Bill Bentley, *Forced to Change: Crisis and Reform in the Canadian Armed Forces* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2015), 27-29.

⁶ Bland, *The Administration of Defence Policy in Canada*, 5.

them to the Royal Military College (RMC) for military-specific education and training. However, as the military college system was re-established, CGS Guy Simonds did not want to exclude “otherwise suitable” candidates for want of an education and campaigned until his retirement for entry into RMC from junior matriculation (Grade 10), with cadets graduating with only one year of university studies. Other senior Canadian Army officers evidenced nostalgia for a British class system that likely never existed in the form they imagined it. Granatstein comments that the Canadian Army officer corps was “resolutely ill-educated” with fewer than one-third having degrees in the 1960s.⁷ This traditional—even anachronistic—orientation of the Army would have two important impacts. It would distance the Army from a country which was hard at the task of educating and professionalising itself. It would also leave its own talent base thinner and less able to provide analysis and policy advice.

Externally, the post-war structure of the Canadian Army was disrupted by Minister of National Defence Paul Hellyer’s reorganisation of the armed services; first by integrating the headquarters and support services and then by total unification into a single Canadian Armed Forces. The 1964 to 1972 period was one of constant reorganisation and attempts to extract savings by combining systems and organisations. The instability of the unification period would be a key factor in the failure of Major-General Roger Rowley’s projects.⁸

At the end of the 1950s the current field force was performing well, but the culture of the Canadian Army posed problems to those trying to plan and implement a future force. The immediate problem facing Rowley and the senior Army staff was how to remodel the Canadian Army to address the challenges of the nuclear battlefield while simultaneously building the capacity of the officer corps to design and manage a modern force.

Roger Rowley (1914-2007) would seem, at first glance, to have been an unlikely reformer. The son of the president of E.B. Eddy, the Ottawa match and paper manufacturer, he was raised by his mother and her sister due to the early death of his father. His aunt had married Sir Francis Macnaughten, 8th Baronet, and they took

⁷ Kasurak, *A National Force*, 48-49; and Granatstein, *Canada’s Army*, 317.

⁸ Vernon J. Kronenberg, *All Together Now: the Organization of the Department of National Defence in Canada, 1964-1972* (Toronto: Canadian Institute of International Affairs, 1973), 100-18.



Major-General Roger Rowley. [Library and Archives Canada ZK-1958-2]

Roger and his elder brother John under their wing and taught them to shoot, cast a fly and be gentlemen. He had a London tailor, shirt maker, bootmaker and hatter. After education at Ottawa's Ashbury College and Dalhousie University, Rowley became a bond trader and was commissioned as a militia officer in the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa in 1933. During the war he rose rapidly and was promoted to acting lieutenant-colonel in 1943 and appointed commander of 5 Battle Wing, Canadian Training School in Great Britain. He reverted

to major as the second in command of the Cameron Highlanders and was promoted to lieutenant-colonel commanding the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders just prior to the Scheldt campaign. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for the capture of Boulogne. Post-war, Rowley attended both the Canadian and British Army staff colleges and the Imperial Defence College. He served in a number of staff appointments in Army Headquarters, including director of military operations and plans, director of infantry and director of military training. From 1954 to 1957, Rowley commanded the 2 Canadian Infantry Brigade Group in Europe.⁹

One might have expected that Rowley would have followed the traditional side of Canadian Army culture as it existed from the pre-war period right into the 1990s—Anglophilic, believing in leadership based on personal qualities rather than training and education and favouring hierarchical and rank-driven organisation based on regimental loyalties. Yet, while Rowley was no rebel and was somewhat of an organisation man, he did not conform to the traditional culture in many important respects. He valued training and education highly, worked by collaboration if not consensus, placed efficiency ahead of tradition and supported a *Canadian* national army.

Rowley was at the centre of three major initiatives to modernise the Army and the Canadian Forces: the redesign of the curriculum of the Canadian Army Staff College, the organisational and tactical renewal of the Army through the Army Tactics and Organization Board and the reconceptualisation of the Canadian military profession through the Officer Development Board. All three of these projects resulted in initiatives and recommendations which today would be applauded. At the time, they were all either overturned, shelved or rejected by Rowley's contemporaries. Rowley had the misfortune to be tasked with major staff projects during a time of organisational change and instability. He also had the misfortune to be on the losing side of a debate between progressives and traditionalists on the character of officership. An examination of Rowley's three failed projects leads to an understanding of the costs of service unification, the weaknesses

⁹ Record of Service in the Canadian Army and the Canadian Armed Forces of Major-General Roger Rowley, DSO, ED, CD, Library and Archives Canada [LAC]; and "Obituary: Major-General Roger Rowley," *The Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 2007, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1545038/Major-General-Roger-Rowley.html>.

of the senior officer corps and the internal sources of collapse which eventually became apparent in the Somalia Inquiry.

REFORMING THE STAFF COLLEGE

Rowley's first appointment after commanding the brigade in Europe was as the commandant of Canadian Army Staff College (CASC) at Fort Frontenac in Kingston, Ontario. Rowley would begin his tenure finding the Army in a state of doctrinal confusion, due to the lack of a clear solution to nuclear war, and disinclined to raise its educational sights, as a result of the contested need to do so.

In the late 1950s, the Canadian Army was just emerging from dependency on the British Army. It had begun its first steps in developing its own approach to war during the mid-1950s. Tactical nuclear weapons made the deficiencies of motorised, road-bound mass armies obvious. One Canadian officer commented after a field exercise that the infantry on the nuclear battlefield "seem[ed] to be there only to become casualties."¹⁰ Initial attempts to develop nuclear tactics were less than successful due to the inherent difficulty of the problem, the lack of a combat development organisation and the Army's top-down command and decision structure which undercut sound staff analysis. Approved doctrine would not emerge until 1960.¹¹

Rowley would also have to cope with the effects of the post-Second World War Canadian Army's collective decision to recruit officers based on character rather than intellectual capacity. This was compounded by the Korean War which generated a requirement for many junior officers which had been met by men "with a limited ability to absorb advanced education." Rowley would find that only 19 per cent of applicants to the Staff College could pass the entrance exam and another 19 per cent were admitted based upon a "supplemental" pass which required additional work. The Army solved the problem of a low pass rate by discontinuing entrance exams on the grounds

¹⁰ Major-General J.V. Allard to all GOC's [General Officers Commanding] and Brigade Commanders, December 1958, Record Group 73/1327, National Defence Headquarters Directorate of History and Heritage Archives. Subsequent references to National Defence Headquarters Directorate of History and Heritage Archives will be as DHH.

¹¹ Kasurak, *A National Force*, 55.

that Staff College entrants had already been selected for promotion to major by examination.¹²

Rowley was not the first person to recognise that the Staff College curriculum required updating. His predecessor, Brigadier-General Pat Bogert, had written in the 1957 edition of *Snowy Owl*, the Staff College journal, that nuclear warfare required major changes to what was being taught. Rowley quickly came to the same conclusion. He met with Lieutenant-General Graham, the chief of the general staff, in May 1958 and argued that students were not assimilating as much as they should nor gaining from their year at Fort Frontenac. Rowley wanted to weed the program and provide more time to practise the remaining subjects. Moreover, Rowley argued that because Canadian formations were assigned to NATO's Northern Army Group, officers required the ability to function at the theatre level. Officers also needed additional training to deal with international staff appointments. Finally, Rowley wanted officers to understand the relationship between the government and the armed forces and the impact of science and technology on the future of war. To achieve all this, he believed the course should be extended from forty-five weeks to twenty months, including two months of leave or private study. The product of the private study would be a "major military paper" in the form of a thesis or a book review.¹³ Rowley was able to get Graham to accept his proposal that the course be both lengthened and broadened. Graham in turn convinced George Pearkes, the minister of national defence, to approve Rowley's proposal.¹⁴

By lengthening the course and adding strategic and arguably "academic" elements to it, Rowley was embracing the progressive

¹² Peter Kasurak, "Concepts of Professionalism in the Canadian Army, 1946-2000: Regimentalism, Reaction, and Reform," *Armed Forces & Society* 37, 1 (January 2011): 97-99.

¹³ Rowley to DGMT [Director General Military Training], Canadian Army Staff College – Policy, 10 June 1958, RG 76/157, DHH; and Howard Coombs, "Brigadier Roger Rowley and the Canadian Army Staff College, 1958-1962," in *The Report of the Officer Development Board: Maj-Gen Rowley and the Education of the Canadian Forces*, ed. Randall Wakelam and Howard Coombs (Waterloo, ON: LCMSDS Press of Wilfrid Laurier University, 2010), xxviii.

¹⁴ Coombs, "Brigadier Roger Rowley," xxxivn11. Coombs notes that Graham made the decision to lengthen the course, but Rowley's 10 June 1958 memo to DGMT makes it clear that he had made the original proposal in discussions with Graham and the director of military training in May of that year.

school of thought—those that believed officership should be based on expertise. Moreover, while the mandate of the Staff College was to prepare officers for all branches of the staff “*in peace and in war,*” the actual content of the curriculum had fallen short of these aspirations.¹⁵ Rowley was insisting that it address its mandate by including civil-military relations, scientific and technical developments and international affairs as well as battlefield tactics.

Even tactics were a considerable problem. As the army did not have a doctrinal manual of its own, the Staff College used a body of material known as “Canadian Army Staff College Future Doctrine” which was based on the knowledge and experience of College staff. When the first army doctrine manual appeared in provisional form it did not include a divisional headquarters, even though the Canadian commitment to NATO was to field a division. Rather, it defined the corps as the basic tactical unit and required the corps headquarters to manage brigade groups directly.¹⁶ The final document, CAMT1-8, *The Infantry Brigade Group in Battle*, published in 1960, at least acknowledged the possibility of divisional headquarters.¹⁷ Rowley found that even with this improvement, CAMT1-8 was inadequate for teaching purposes. Unlike the Staff College doctrine, the official manual was based on existing equipment and did not provide for the improvements in mobility and firepower that were planned for the 1964-65 future. In his opinion, it was vital that the Staff College curriculum recognise the increased tactical use of air transport, the inclusion of surface-to-surface missile nuclear fires, surface-to-air missiles within the brigade group, tracked carriers for all units and the quantities and types of communication equipment that were actually in production. Major-General Jean Allard, the vice chief of the general staff, agreed with most of Rowley’s recommendations and thought that students coming off the 1961-63 course be prepared to deal with the armoured personnel carrier-mounted army slated to arrive in 1963. He instructed Rowley to carry on with the current brigade headquarters until the new logistics concept was in place. He did not foresee surface-to-air missile batteries at the brigade level, but

¹⁵ As quoted in Coombs, “Brigadier Roger Rowley,” xxxi. Italics added by Coombs.

¹⁶ Planning 1961-63 Staff Course, Prepared by Commandant CASC [Canadian Army Staff College], 21 September 1960, RG 76/157, DHH.

¹⁷ CAMT 1-8, *The Infantry Brigade Group in Battle, Part 1 – Tactics*, 1960, 55, RG 81/344, DHH.

rather at corps. Nevertheless, he thought their employment should be part of the curriculum.¹⁸

Rowley had succeeded in overhauling the Staff College curriculum and keeping pace with equipment changes, but his hopes that students would become scholars appear to have failed. There was only one paper published in *Snowy Owl* on national strategy and student cartoons in the Staff College journal gently derided the self-study period, suggesting that it was mainly used to catch up on the crush of work in the main program or in recovering from it.¹⁹ There seemed to be no ground swell of enthusiasm from junior ranks for strategic thought nor apparently much support from the top. As for teaching doctrine that was future-oriented, Rowley's initiative barely lasted long enough for his chair to cool. His successor, Brigadier D.C. Cameron, complained that only 23 per cent of the curriculum was based on current doctrine and that "consideration must be given to bringing the Canadian Army Staff College back into step with the rest of the Canadian Army." Cameron preferred to teach current doctrine and have students discuss the impact of future weapons. He also suggested that the course could be reduced in length.²⁰ The course was eventually reduced to one year in 1965 as part of an overall effort to unify all staff training in the Canadian Forces. As a result, the CASC became a junior staff course to mesh with the new unified Canadian Forces College.

THE ARMY TACTICS AND ORGANIZATION BOARD (ATOBO)

In September 1961, the government announced an increase of 11,571 personnel in the authorised strength of the Army to bring the brigade in Europe up to its war establishment strength, provide for reinforcements, bring field force units in Canada to war establishment

¹⁸ Brig. [Brigadier] R. Rowley, Commandant CASC to MGen. [Major-General] J.V. Allard, VCGS [Vice Chief of the General Staff], demi-official letter, 26 September 1960, RG 76/157, DHH; and Minutes of a Meeting Between VCGS and Comdt CASC, Planning of 1961-63 Staff Course – General, 27 October 1960, RG 76/157, DHH.

¹⁹ Coombs, "Brigadier Roger Rowley" xxxi. See *Snowy Owl* 2, 3 (1963-1965): 114 as an example.

²⁰ Brig. D.C. Cameron, Cmdt CASC to VCGS, Tactical Doctrine, 1963-65 Course, 25 April 1962, RG 76/157, DHH.

and form a divisional headquarters and signals unit. The divisional headquarters was required so that Canada could meet its obligations under NATO's 1957 directive MC70, which called on the Supreme Allied Commander Europe to prepare a response to any type of incursion, possibly without the use of nuclear weapons. MC70 also mandated integrating nuclear delivery systems, including artillery and surface-to-surface missiles, into the Shield forces. Canada was obligated to put the balance of 1 Canadian Infantry Division in Europe by "M-day plus movement time," that is, immediately.²¹

The primary role of divisional headquarters was to command the division in war. Lieutenant-General Geoffrey Walsh, the CGS, intended to mobilise the headquarters two to three months of the year so that its staff would be trained in the battle role. When not training for war, the headquarters would plan operations and training.²² Walsh was not completely happy with the analysis of a divisional organisation produced by his staff. It was a *tour d'horizon* of foreign practices and an inventory of problems but lacked solutions. He also faced pushback from the general officers commanding (GOCs) of the geographical commands who feared the new divisional headquarters would infringe on their authority. Walsh therefore changed the peacetime mandate of the division headquarters to that of a think tank and put Roger Rowley in charge to straighten things out. The Division Headquarters was to conduct studies to define tactical doctrine and to determine the method of command and control within the Division. Rowley was given authority to visit units and formations as he considered appropriate and reported directly to the CGS. He was jointly appointed as Commander, Army Tactics and Organization Board (ATOB) and Commander, Division Headquarters. The terms of reference were more or less the same as those of the Division Headquarters but added the responsibilities of providing input to war games and operations research studies and supervising user trials, field experiments and troop tests. The

²¹ MGen. J.P.E. Bernatchez, VCGS to GOC's and Branch Heads, Army Manpower, 18 September 1961, Kardex 112.352 (D44), DHH; and Col. H.R.A. Parker, DMO&P to DSD, Role and Location of HQ 1 Cdn Inf Div, 18 October 1961, Kardex 112.352 (D44), DHH.

²² Col. H.R.A. Parker, DMO&P to DSD, Role and Location of HQ 1 Cdn Inf Div, 18 October 1961, Kardex 112.352 (D44), DHH; and LGen. Walsh, CGS to Chairman Army Policy Co-ordination Committee, 20 November 1961, Kardex 112.352 (D44), DHH.

peacetime staff of the ATOB/1 Canadian Division Headquarters was fourteen officers and seventeen other ranks.²³

Walsh demanded that the division fit within the Army's budgetary and manpower constraints which limited it to 19,000 personnel. According to Walsh, "[i]t will take some time to arrive at this optimum divisional organization. It must, however, be ready for examination at the next Tactical Symposium," or in one year's time. He directed Rowley to outline tentative organisations as soon as possible, trialed at unit stations during the winter and at field concentrations the next summer. One Canadian brigade would be trained in Russian tactics to act as an opposing force in the trials and the other brigades would employ Canadian doctrine. He provided Rowley with a list of the specific trials he wanted conducted.²⁴

One wonders what Rowley thought of the task he had been given. His small staff had been activated on 1 September and now, six weeks later, he was given a job that the entire Army Headquarters had been unable to satisfactorily accomplish and ordered to do it within a year! Complicating his situation was the fact that the resources necessary to test out ideas were controlled by the five GOCs who had already indicated some jealousy of a Divisional Headquarters tasking their resources. An additional problem was having to develop doctrine for all levels of the organisation at the same time. For example, the Army had decided to acquire the SS11B anti-tank missile, but it was unclear whether it should (or even could) be mounted on the Centurion tank. Micro-level issues such as this would have to be decided at the same time as determining the overall architecture of the division. Financial constraints and the manpower cap were other complicating factors and potential option-killers. The prospects for success of Rowley's project cannot have looked especially good.

²³ Brig. W.S. Murdoch, DGCS [Deputy Chief of the General Staff] to VAG [Vice Adjutant General], VQMG [Vice Quartermaster General], DGPO [Director General Plans and Operations], DGMT [Director General Military Training], Role and Location – Headquarters 1 Canadian Infantry Division, 10 November 1961; Extract from Minutes of the 61/42 Meeting of the Army Policy Coordination Committee, 24 November 1961; LGen. G. Walsh, CGS [Chief of the General Staff] to HQ Cnds [Headquarters of Commands] and Branch Heads, Headquarters 1st Canadian Infantry Division (HQ 1 Cdn Inf Div), Reactivation and Terms of Reference, 20 July 1962; and LGen. G. Walsh, CGS, SD 1 Letter No.62, Army Tactics and Organization Board, Activation and Terms of Reference, all in Kardex 112.352 (D44), DHH.

²⁴ Army Tactical Symposium –1962, [19 October 1962], RG 73/1314, DHH.

Rowley's approach to his task differed from what the Army had done before regarding organisation and doctrine studies and, sadly, what would follow his project. Rowley based his study on general principles which were explicitly stated and conducted his work by a data-driven approach which used staff research, operations research studies, field trials and experiments which were consolidated and filtered through a number of working groups. The top-down, *ex cathedra* management style that had been typical of Canadian Army doctrinal studies was ruled out by Walsh's insistence on objective trials and Rowley's own inclinations.

Rowley organised the required studies on a branch basis, plus several "functional studies" of fire support, anti-tank defence, reconnaissance and surveillance, the armour/infantry relationship, air defence, aviation and logistics. These "functional studies" targeted the most problematic issues of divisional organisation. Although using field trials and war games to the extent possible to develop and select options, Rowley believed that ultimately, organisation was a matter of professional judgement. Moreover, finding that the Army had already embarked on a re-equipment program without firm concepts and doctrine to back it up, he commented:

The first problem in studying organization is to find some rational basis for the work. It seems reasonable to say, at first, that organizations stem from tactical requirements. If we have a clearcut tactical doctrine, the organizations to suit it should flow from it. However, the erratic and almost haphazard development of organizations in the past lead one to believe that the reverse is just as likely to be true. Tactics often seem to develop from organizations and, of course, the equipment on hand. What does seem certain is that there is, and indeed should be, a definite connection between organizations and tactics.²⁵

He therefore set out his own criteria and principles for organisation design. In brief, these were:

- **Flexibility** – The organisation should have sufficient parts to allow it to vary the proportion of strength allocated to

²⁵ Army Tactics and Organization Board, Final Report, ATOB 1963 Activities, n.d. [November 1963?], RG 87/165, DHH. Hereafter cited as ATOB Final Report.

protection, striking or other roles without disrupting the internal organisation of its parts;

- **Simplicity** – There must not be so many parts in an organisation that the influence of the commander is too widely spread or on too many levels of command;
- **Austerity** – The organisation must not be burdened with such a variety of complex and sophisticated equipment that it will divert commanders from leadership and soldiers from the task of contacting and destroying the enemy;
- **Durability** – There must be a reserve to allow for some attrition without a significant loss of effectiveness; and
- **Stability** – The organisation should be designed so that interference with basic structure is exceptional.

According to Rowley, military operations consisted of two basic functions: hitting and guarding. Any organisation therefore required a minimum of two components as well as a third component as a reserve. Three component organisations were not flexible and required the commander to break down one or more units, whereas four component organisations allowed commanders to vary the strength of hitting, guarding and reserve without much organisational change. The problem was that if every level of the organisation had four components, the organisation would quickly become too large, unaffordable and unwieldy.

The extensive trials program included studies of a three versus four company infantry battalion with two variants of the three company version, the anti-tank fire unit assessing the trade-offs between the SS11B and ENTAC missiles and the 106 mm recoilless rifle, artillery trials and an armoured regiment organisation study. The trials were combined with the results from operations research studies and war games conducted by the Canadian Army Operations Research Establishment (CAORE), the most notable of which were the Iron Crown series of war games which assessed the effectiveness of Canadian Army anti-tank equipment and doctrine.²⁶

²⁶ Combat Development and Tactical Doctrine Committee, Minutes of the 62/3 Meeting, 29 November 1962, RG 81/272, DHH; Combat Development and Tactical Doctrine Committee, Minutes of the 63/1 Meeting, 18 February 1963, RG 81/272, DHH; and ATOB Final Report, 311.

The trials and studies were brought together by a series of coordination conferences chaired by Rowley. Participants included ATOB senior staff, Army Headquarters arms directors, the director general of military training and senior CAORE staff. Rowley chaired the conferences which generally began with a staff paper which was discussed by those present. Rowley would ask questions and let staff explain and debate the issues. He would occasionally interject to support or close off an issue and always summarised the consensus reached by the end of discussion, although he clearly made his own decisions and could overrule staff and advisors.²⁷

The character of the debate within ATOB encouraged by Rowley can best be seen in the discussion around the organisation of infantry and armour. Staff presented a paper advocating the integration of the two combat arms at the unit level, effectively creating a single combat arm. Some ATOB senior staff objected, calling this arrangement “inflexible” and “an uneconomic use of armour” while others argued that it was necessary because infantry could not move without armour support and it was unlikely that the infantry would ever be in a position where tanks could not be well employed. The director of armour did not see a great advantage, but ATOB staff claimed it would increase unit spirit and efficiency. In this case, Rowley summarised the discussion as agreeing that combining infantry and armour at the unit level would be beneficial. The debate then moved on to whether combining the arms at the unit level would improve training. In this case, both the director of armour and the director of infantry thought it would reduce competition between the two arms if everyone was in the same corps while others suggested that using the armour model of training would improve quality of the end product. Rowley asked the group their opinions regarding the interchangeability of soldiers between tanks and infantry and about logistic concerns and did not hear any strong objections. There was a strong consensus that mechanisation of infantry and the introduction of the armoured personnel carrier (APC) would mean that command would be exercised through radio communications as was already the case for the armour corps. While there was some concern that the span of control would become too great, Rowley did not think so and thought that experience during the Second World War showed that

²⁷ Army Tactics and Organization Board, Coordinating Conference No. 1, Digest of Presentation – Infantry/Tank Relationship, 19 March 1963, RG 80/234, DHH.

radio command could work for infantry without difficulty. Overall, Rowley summarised the discussion as concluding that there was “a large body of opinion that favoured the ultimate amalgamation of these two fighting arms.”²⁸

The ATOB Final Report did not recommend the creation of a single combat arm, even though it tilted heavily toward what Rowley called the “Panzer” model. Rowley argued that this model, which was tank-heavy but always integrated with infantry, was superior to the alternatives of using tanks for infantry support or tanks alone. Rowley was constrained in going further by terms of reference which required all recommendations to be implementable by 1965. He was also blocked by CGS Walsh and Vice-Chief Major-General J.P.E. Bernatchez’s unwillingness to even consider the question. Rowley proposed a study of the matter twice but was turned down each time as “not practical” and out of step with the development of Paul Hellyer’s White Paper. Walsh and Bernatchez had been more than willing to combine all the support arms into an integrated service battalion to meet operational needs, but apparently could not face reorganisation of the combat arms. They were also likely influenced by the knowledge that Rowley’s armour-heavy model was diametrically opposed to Hellyer’s objective of an air portable “mobile force.”²⁹

Overall, the Final Report decisively rejected existing Canadian Army nuclear warfare doctrine which was based on “attack and evade” principles and which rejected static deployments. The concept required units to come together temporarily to attack the enemy and then to rapidly disperse to avoid becoming a nuclear target. Rowley, however, believed that what the doctrine manual called “stabilize, contain and delineate” the enemy ultimately meant “stop.” He pointed out that there had in fact been increased stress on digging in, prepared rifle positions, the cover of obstacles by fire and the occupation of ground. The report found that approved doctrine was not consistent with what was practised in training, called for in operational plans or with weapons and equipment. The division

²⁸ Army Tactics and Organization Board, Coordinating Conference No. 1, Digest of Presentation – Infantry/Tank Relationship, 19 March 1963, RG 80/234, DHH.

²⁹ MGen. J.P.E. Bernatchez, VCGS to Distribution List [ATOB, Canadian Army Staff College and principal CFHQ army staff], Future Activities, Army Tactics and Organization Board, 28 November 1963, RG 24, Vol. 18835, LAC; and Army Combat Development and Tactical Doctrine Committee, Minutes of 63/4 Meeting, 10 December 1963, RG 81/272, DHH.

proposed by Rowley would ideally be based on all arms battalions, but under the constraints placed on the study would have to be based on infantry and armour formations. The armour regiment, however, would include almost double the number of tanks, the establishment being raised from forty-seven to seventy-eight. Current anti-tank missiles were not seen as much of a solution to the Warsaw Pact tank hordes as they had a lower rate of fire and no better accuracy than a tank gun while having less protection and being more expensive. Rowley recommended that if more anti-tank forces were required they should be supplied with more tanks. Infantry was to be mounted on APCs, but the Final Report recommended more trials be conducted before crews and tactics were decided.³⁰

The Final Report was constrained by manpower limits from strengthening close support and air defence artillery to the extent it regarded as necessary. Field engineers, aviation and logistic elements all required improvements beyond that which could be provided within the limits placed on the division. The problems surfaced by ATOB's analysis were never resolved as operational requirements cancelled further tank and infantry trials and the Army's studies were overtaken by parallel projects aimed at designing the "mobile force" desired by Minister Paul Hellyer. Rowley and the ATOB would spend the next year working on a study of the Army's reconnaissance needs, but while a detailed report was completed, little else was accomplished. Rowley's preface in his 1965 report on ATOB's disbandment complained of "frustration" and commented that:

ATOB then has had unique opportunities to study fundamental problems of military organization on Canadian military activities. Unfortunately, they did not, as ATOB's work always seemed to be out of place with the actual reorganization being carried out in the Canadian Army and, in the event, the proposed division was never formed.³¹

Rowley was correct. Walsh had gone to the Chiefs of Staff Committee for approval in principle to reorganise the Army in March 1963, months before the Final Report had been completed. By the time he was able to go the Minister in May 1964, the task was to make the Army fit the overall needs of the Hellyer White Paper. Although

³⁰ ATOB Final Report, 60-68, 96-100.

³¹ ATOB Report on 1965 Activities, n.d., RG 24, Vol. 18835, LAC.

Walsh was able to take some steps to reorganise, in September 1964 Air Chief Marshal Frank Miller, the chief of the defence staff, deferred any more changes to the Army until there was an integrated defence program to guide the Forces as a whole.³²

The ATOB was the high point of the Army's ability to solve tactical problems and design a future force. It combined multiple methodologies and followed a process that utilised staff opinion rather than overriding it. Yet rational analysis had met its limit. Even progressives such as Walsh and Bernatchez would not consider a radical change to the organisation of the combat arms. And while the Army itself had abandoned top-down policy development, the political level had not. Hellyer's mobile force initiative replicated Simonds and Graham's approach by beginning with the answer and asking staff to fill in the details. Fact-based decision making had its limits even among the various schools of progressives.

SWAN SONG – THE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The report of the Officer Development Board (ODB), tabled in 1969, is the work for which Rowley is best remembered and is arguably his greatest contribution to the Canadian military profession. Like his other projects, it failed to gain much acceptance at the time. Its recommendations would languish for over thirty years before implementation.

The armed services had traditionally not seen education as the most important quality of officership, favouring character instead. In its final report the ODB would note that about 60 per cent of candidates accepted into the officer corps each year had less than a university degree and a majority only had junior matriculation (Grade 10).³³ By the 1960s, opinion in the Army was divided: traditionalists

³² LGen. G. Walsh, CGS, to Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, Canadian Divisional Reorganization, 1 March 1963; LGen. G. Walsh to the Minister, Organization of the Field Force, White Paper on Defence, 7 May 1964; and ACM Frank Miller, CDS to COpR [MGen. J. Allard], Organization of the Field Force, Royal Canadian Engineers, 29 September 1964, all in RG 1223, Ser 1, File 361, DHH.

³³ "Report of the Officer Development Board: Volume I (including Annexes)," in *The Report of the Officer Development Board*, ed. Wakelam and Coombs, 66. This facsimile of Volume I of the ODB report is the most accessible source and will be cited in lieu of archival sources. The report can also be found at RG 82/140, DHH. Hereafter cited as ODB Report.

continued to stress personal character and field experience, but progressives saw a need to improve the intellectual level of the Army and improve its standing in the wider community. Air Chief Marshal Frank Miller, the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and shortly to be named the first chief of the defence staff (CDS), directed the inter-service Personnel Members Committee (PMC) to initiate a study to develop a rationale for the services' need for officers with university degrees. Miller was apparently motivated by the Glassco Commission's criticism of the services' ability to manage a modern military organisation.³⁴

The PMC not only concluded that the command of nuclear-armed forces based on increasingly sophisticated technology demanded higher education levels, but also that the armed forces were becoming an unattractive employer to the most intellectually capable portion of the population. The PMC estimated that the army and navy required two-thirds of their officers to be degree holders while the air force required about half of its officers to complete university.³⁵

Jean Allard inherited the file when he took over as chief of the defence staff from Miller. He faced the added difficulties of trying to determine what officership in a unified armed service meant and how to unify the former services' officer development programs into a coherent whole. Allard circulated a development plan of his own to key staff and, based on the responses he received, decided that a full-time study group under a senior officer was required to address the issues involved.³⁶ Allard turned to Rowley, then on his terminal posting approaching compulsory retirement age, to lead the study. The mandate he gave to Rowley was:

To examine all phases of the regular officer profession from selection and initial training to the highest levels, with a view of producing an Officer Development Plan designed to ensure maximum efficiency and

³⁴ Armed Forces Sub-Committee on Pay and Allowances, Submission to the Personnel Members Committee, Service Requirements for University Graduates, 15 July 1964, Larry Motiuk Papers, Canadian Forces College, Toronto. Hereafter cited as Motiuk Papers, CFC.

³⁵ Armed Forces Sub-Committee on Pay and Allowances, Submission to the Personnel Members Committee, Service Requirements for University Graduates, 15 July 1964, Motiuk Papers, CFC.

³⁶ Gen. J.V. Allard, Officer Development Plan, 25 May 1967, Motiuk Papers, CFC. While Allard's cover letter has survived, a copy of the outline plan could not be located.

economy of resources in the selection, training and education of the officer corps required to command and administer the Armed Forces.³⁷

Rowley approached the problem in an expansive manner. He told the RMC Faculty Board that “[n]o Canadian [had] ever waxed philosophical about the Canadian Armed Forces” but that he “would be developing a rationale, then a philosophy, for the profession of arms in Canada.”³⁸ He would start by looking at the rationale for standing forces in Canada and the requirements of the profession of arms before going on to look at education levels, attrition rates, the development program for officers throughout their career and the organisation of the officer development system. As at the ATOB, Rowley would allow his team to work and develop concepts within the framework he had established but without constraints based on his personal views.³⁹

The Board’s work on a concept of military professionalism began with a paper written by Brigadier B.J. Guimond, the deputy chairman. Guimond outlined Canada’s military history and concluded that although Canada’s militia tradition had been successful in generating large forces during the two world wars, it had failed to develop the military profession. Officers “remained an appendage rather than an integral part of society. Admired on memorial days, [they were] soon relegated to the cloister of [their] garrison which many a Canadian considered little more than a British enclave totally unrelated to his society.” This perception, according to Guimond, was deserved. Trained in the British military tradition, its history and imperial geopolitics, the Canadian officer had failed to fit into the intellectual and professional pattern of Canadian life. Colonialism had another negative effect on the Canadian military profession. Despite Canada’s great material contributions during the two world wars, Canadian military officials had little or no access to decision making at the theatre level or to grand strategy.⁴⁰

³⁷ ODB Report, 5.

³⁸ Royal Military College Faculty Board, 152nd Meeting, 28 November 1967, in author’s possession.

³⁹ Randall Wakelam, “Officer Professional Education in the Canadian Forces and the Rowley Report, 1969,” *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d’histoire de l’éducation* 16, 2 (2004): 297.

⁴⁰ Brig. B.J. Guimond, *The Rationale for the Officer Development Study*, 28 December 1967, Motiuk Papers, CFC.

Canada's foreign and defence policy required a reversal of traditional ways. The NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation meant that Canada now had to maintain forces-in-being which were highly trained and capable of immediate response. Moreover, while many of Canada's policy goals could be pursued from within the structure of alliances, there had been a "gradual metamorphosis" into autonomous or semi-autonomous forces which could act as peacekeeping or intervention forces to prevent great power confrontations. Officers not only had to be able to manage such forces in operations, but they had to be capable of devising strategy and "be prepared to think in terms of our national interests where they do not coincide with, or bear little relation to, those of our allies." Within twenty years, Guimond could see the resolution of the "German problem" and the relaxation of tension between the two blocks to the point where an active military role in Europe would lose its validity.⁴¹

Guimond's paper served as a platform for discussion within the Board and much of his thinking was reflected in the ODB's final report. It adopted his concern that colonialism had had adverse effects on the Canadian military profession. The ODB final report stated:

It is a measure of the total absence of significant dialogue between the military and political elements of the country that while the officer, through his initial development and subsequent training, was, consciously or not, following a policy of Imperial centralization, his political masters were opposing this same policy. ...

Gradually we find the professional Canadian officer isolating himself from his own society and viewing his military role in terms of Imperial defence and strategy, with little or no concern for the study of the strategic problems likely to face his own country. ... [T]his Canadian officer had no conception of the strategic implications of Canada being at once an Atlantic and a Pacific power, or of the fact that his country's vital interests could quite possibly be deeply affected by policies developed to the south, including the far reaches of the South American continent, rather than in the protection of Singapore, Hong Kong or Gibraltar.

⁴¹ Guimond, *The Rationale for the Officer Development Study*, CFC. Guimond's hypothesis was correct. He wrote in 1967 and the Berlin Wall came down in 1989.

It is astonishing to realize that despite its geographical position, and the absence of any immediate military threat, Canada could afford to live without a realistic strategy, and indeed without strategists; but the fact remains.⁴²

Echoing Guimond's paper, the final report argued that "Canada supplied troops and material for war machines to be planned, organized and commanded from elsewhere."⁴³

The ODB final report laid less emphasis than Guimond on the Canadian Forces as an independent intervention force and stressed the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) and NATO alliance commitments, commenting that it was unlikely that commitments to the United Nations (UN) for major forces would increase. Nevertheless, the final report envisaged much the same forces as Guimond had, namely balanced, strategically mobile land, sea and air forces. Forces that would be able to "survive and make a viable contribution" under conditions of tactical nuclear warfare and forces that would employ modern weapon systems and computer-assisted command and control. Officers in this high-tech force would have to be capable of managing across the continuum of combat intensity and across military environments. The requirements for managing this force would be not only technical education, but an increased understanding of the social sciences and the liberal arts.⁴⁴

Given the Board's assessment of the armed forces Canada would maintain in the future, it is not surprising that they strongly supported a military profession based on expertise. They quoted the Prussian edict of 1808:

The only title to an officer's commission shall be, in time of peace, education and professional knowledge; in time of war, distinguished valour and perception. From the entire nation, therefore, all individuals who possess these qualities are eligible for the highest military posts. All previously existing class preference in the military establishment is abolished, and every man, without regard to his origins, has equal duties and equal rights.⁴⁵

⁴² ODB Report, 22-23.

⁴³ ODB Report, 23.

⁴⁴ ODB Report., 31-33.

⁴⁵ ODB Report, 18-19.

Rather hopefully, the Board noted that under this policy “a new military aristocracy of education and achievement emerged.” Corporate spirit would knit the officer corps into a professional community which would become in turn a highly respected social entity.⁴⁶

A second major principle adopted by Rowley’s group was the rejection of Samuel Huntington’s definition of the military profession as “managers of violence.” This concept places the combat arms at the centre of the profession and renders supporting specialists, such as logisticians, second-class citizens.⁴⁷ The Board stated that, while this definition may have worked in the simpler past, “the enormous complexity of the modern military function makes a simple definition of this nature irrelevant and renders comparison on a function basis with other professions artificial and limiting.”⁴⁸ Rowley adopted a “big tent” view of the profession. No military branches or occupations were “core” with the others peripheral. Moreover, the officer corps was expected to contain soldier-diplomats to manage peacekeeping and alliance operations and soldier-scholars to carry out research to expand the body of knowledge of the military profession. Rowley and the Board expected that a great deal of research should be undertaken in the area of national security studies by the military itself and that it should lead to the award of Master of Military Science degrees to serving officers.⁴⁹

The final report also contained a statement of “the canons of the military ethic.” This was a short list of responsibilities about one page in length. While all of the soldierly virtues it contained were traditional, there was no reference to the inevitability of war or implication that war was an acceptable ingredient of a nation’s foreign policy. This explicitly tied the military ethic to a liberal, rather than a conservative, realist philosophy. The statement was otherwise unexceptional, listing the duty of upholding constitutional authority, loyalty to the service, respect to other members of the profession, care of subordinates and unlimited liability to carry out duties. However, perhaps with a view to the recent “revolt of the admirals,” it also

⁴⁶ ODB Report, 18-19.

⁴⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 12.

⁴⁸ ODB Report, 18.

⁴⁹ ODB Report, 32, 47.

contained the duty to “maintain and respect the legally constituted hierarchy of the Armed Forces.”⁵⁰

The core elements of the report were radical. The British colonial heritage of the armed forces was criticised as having limited the development of a truly Canadian military. Officership based on expertise was proposed for the officer corps and the expectations placed on officers expanded dramatically to include commanding elements of all the services, actively contributing to the development of national security policy and strategy and being scholars engaged in expanding the knowledge of their profession. None of these demands drew much fire individually; what became lightning rods for criticism were the degreed officer corps and the centralisation of the officer development system proposed by Rowley’s report.

Rowley found considerable opposition to a degreed officer corps amongst his senior Canadian Forces colleagues. The commandant of the Staff College, Brigadier-General W.A. Milroy told him that education was not the same as military leadership, or even the main component of it. A member of the College directing staff summed up by saying “the degree requirement [was] far too restrictive for the type of fighting leader we need.” Major-General Bruce Macdonald, the deputy chief of personnel, and Vice-Admiral R.L. Hennessy, the Comptroller General, both thought insisting on a degree would increase attrition in the “great variety of officer positions which do not now, and never will, require a university education.” Brigadier-General S. Mathwin Davin, the director general of systems management in Canadian Forces Headquarters and soon-to-be commandant of the National Defence College, claimed “a Bachelor’s degree for a hired killer – even if we call him a ‘peace keeper’ etc. may well turn out to be a handicap.”⁵¹

These comments gave Rowley pause and he asked his team to consider whether they had been too uncompromising regarding a degreed officer corps, but he did not ultimately overrule them. The ODB final report justified a bachelor’s degree as the baseline

⁵⁰ ODB Report, 36-37.

⁵¹ MGen. R. Rowley, Report of Visit to CASC, 7-9 Feb 68, 16 February 1968, Annex B, Second Meeting, 8 February 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC; VAdm. R.L. Hennessy to DPRC, Degree Requirements – Canadian Armed Forces, 20 February 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC; MGen. Bruce F. Macdonald to DPRC, Baccalaureate Degrees, 27 February 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC; and BGen. S. Mathwin Davis to DPRC, Baccalaureate Degrees, 19 February 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC.

requirement for officership primarily on the requirement to be able to recruit from the intellectually top 15 per cent of the male population. This group was attending university in ever greater numbers and the Board believed the non-university pool of promising candidates would soon be too small to meet the Forces' needs. They also believed that with technology becoming increasingly sophisticated and demands of advising the government on geopolitics becoming more complex that "it [was] inconceivable that the future defence of the nation should be entrusted to officers who are not both literate and scientifically literate."⁵²

The second major issue which stood between the Board's report and implementation was the architecture of the officer development system. The Board proposed a single authority, the Canadian Defence Education Centre (CDEC), to manage the entire system. There would be two colleges under it: the Canadian Defence College offering in-service education to commissioned officers and the Canadian Military College providing undergraduate and graduate education. CDEC would be in Ottawa at the Rockcliffe base and would not only provide its courses from that location but would also include a library and wargaming facility. Ottawa would also be home to a National Security Course offered by a pan-governmental Centre for Security Studies. This would provide strategic studies components of CDEC courses as well as be a government "think tank."⁵³

Richard Preston, in his history of the Royal Military College, blames the failure of the Department of National Defence to implement the ODB Report on what he saw as Rowley's attempt to recommend an ideal system without regard to the cost.⁵⁴ Yet it appears that Preston's explanation is too simple. Rowley—along with Allard and Léo Cadieux, the defence minister—recognised that full implementation of the Board's report was too expensive to be accomplished all at once and a phased approach would be needed. Randall Wakelam has pointed to the number of sacred cows implementation would have harmed. Placing a two-star commander between the various existing colleges and the CDS would have

⁵² ODB Report, 38-41.

⁵³ Wakelam, "Officer Professional Education in the Canadian Forces," 287-314 provides the best overview of the structural proposals and their inherent problems.

⁵⁴ Richard Preston, *To Serve Canada: A History of the Royal Military College Since the Second World War* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1991), 100-01.

downgraded the existing institutions. The mix of civil and military governance for both academics and officer education was radical and likely unacceptable to many in both communities. The centralisation of all the military colleges to Ottawa would have been difficult for incumbent faculty members to accept and would have raised questions regarding seniority and family relocation.⁵⁵

The ODB recommendations melted away like a snowball left on a hot radiator. The replacement of Rowley with the Commandant of the Canadian Army Staff College, Major-General Milroy, put an officer in charge of implementing a report who had doubted its fundamental premises. With the Forces downsizing, Milroy advocated “a new, more modest plan.” The gaming facility and strategic studies centre were dropped as too costly as was the school for upgrading candidates to university entrance level. Cadieux approved a stage one of centralising post-commissioning development at Canadian Forces Base Rockcliffe with a second phase of moving the military colleges to that site along with post-graduate education, but no action was ever taken.⁵⁶ According to Milroy’s later recollection, he elected not to implement the centralised model proposed by Rowley based on his own appreciation of Ottawa *realpolitik*. He instead set up a Canadian Defence Education Establishments organisation which preserved the three military colleges. Cadieux apparently improved Milroy’s “understanding” of the political value of three colleges for regional visibility and cadet recruiting. There were also those outside the department who cautioned that centralising military education and creating a strategic studies centre in Ottawa might smack of an attempt to create a “military-industrial complex” and a centre which would have a disproportionate effect on influencing government policy.⁵⁷ In the end, not even Milroy’s Canadian Defence Education Establishments survived. By 1972, the presence of academic education in National Defence Headquarters had been reduced to that of a staff colonel within the Assistant Deputy Minister (Personnel) Branch.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Wakelam, “Officer Professional Education in the Canadian Forces,” 306-08.

⁵⁶ Defence Council – Minute of 271st Meeting – 25 August 1969; and Defence Council – Minute of 272nd Meeting – 4 September 1969, RG 73/1223, Box 68, File 1394, DHH.

⁵⁷ Dr. J.A. Corry [former Principal of Queen’s University] to Major-General R. Rowley, 16 December 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC.

⁵⁸ Wakelam, “Officer Professional Education in the Canadian Forces,” 307-10; and Corry to Rowley, 16 December 1968, Motiuk Papers, CFC.

In his forward to the ODB Report, General Allard concluded with the comment that:

It matters little whether the Forces have their present manpower strength and financial budget, or half of them, or double them; without a properly educated, effectively trained, professional officer corps the Forces would, in the future, be doomed to, at the best, mediocrity; at the worst, disaster.⁵⁹

Allard's fears materialised in the collapse of discipline in stabilisation missions in Croatia and Somalia in the early 1990s. The Somalia incident, centred on the death of a Somali prisoner in custody, led to a public inquiry which became so controversial that defence minister of the day, Douglas Young, terminated it. To shape the government's response to the inquiry, he appointed four prominent academics to make recommendations. While Young's academic advisors did not agree as to how the army should be restructured, they did agree that the officer corps was undereducated and out of touch with Canadian society. Jack Granatstein summed it up by commenting that the officer corps was "remarkably ill-educated...surely one of the worst in the Western world."⁶⁰ A major focus of the reforms initiated by Young included a curriculum for RMC placing greater emphasis on the arts and social sciences, introducing national security studies and strategic studies to the Canadian Forces College and requiring officers to hold a baccalaureate degree. By 2009, the goal of a degreed officer corps had been substantially attained.⁶¹

Rowley's structural reforms from 1969 were also accepted at about the same time. A Canadian Defence Academy (CDA) was established in 2002 that had one academic college (RMC) and one professional college (Canadian Forces College) under it. The CDA is the Forces' champion for lifelong learning. It is not, however, concentrated on one campus in Ottawa.

⁵⁹ ODB Report, 4.

⁶⁰ J.L. Granatstein, "A Paper Prepared for the Minister of National Defence," 25 March 1997, RG 96/30, Series 9, Box 11, Files 21-4, Claude Beaugard fonds, DHH.

⁶¹ Kasurak, *A National Force*, 272-74.

CONCLUSION – THE IMPORTANCE OF FAILED REFORM

The world loves successful commanders—but why should we care about a failed one? To answer this question, one must understand how the model of military professionalism defined by Rowley's initiatives was based on knowledge and represented the progressive wing of the profession. The opposing, traditional model was an officership based on character, rather than knowledge. It was not interested in dealing with strategic or political issues and was content to have its strategic architecture designed and delivered by Great Power allies. The leadership style of the traditional school was, as Horn and Bentley have pointed out, hierarchical and authoritarian.

Rowley diverged from these characteristics on almost every point. He was a champion of officership based on knowledge, during both his tenure as commandant of the Canadian Army Staff College, where he expanded the curriculum and tried to nurture soldier-scholars, and later as the chair of the Officer Development Board, where he endorsed a degreed officer corps. Knowledge-based solutions—like merging the armour and infantry corps—were to be tested, not rejected out of hand. Moreover, his vision of the profession extended beyond that of tactical technician to participation in national policy and strategy. The ODB recommendation of an interdepartmental strategic studies centre in Ottawa would have created an institution that could have both bridged the gap between the military and the political level and generated a Canadian national strategic point of view.

Rowley's version of the military profession was hierarchical but not autocratic. As the commandant of the Army Tactics and Organization Board he was not afraid to make decisions after a full and free discussion of options with his staff. These discussions were collegial and not driven by a top-down solution in search of staff substantiation. In the case of the ODB, Rowley did not overrule staff on the recommendation of a degreed officer corps, even though he had some personal reservations and the knowledge that many of his senior colleagues were opposed to the idea. Rowley's way of doing business was more inclusive and professional than that of most of his senior colleagues.

However, rather than a knowledge-based profession that meshed with the political leadership of the country and which was able to develop and utilise the talent of all levels of the profession, the Canadian Army and the Canadian Armed Forces pursued a traditional path.

The period that followed was marked by continuing divergence of the Canadian Forces and the political level, with the Forces “working” less with the political level and more often “shirking” and pursuing their own agenda, notably the preservation of heavy forces on NATO’s Central Front.⁶² The perception by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Defence Minister Donald Macdonald that the army was shirking led directly to the Management Review Group and the replacement of Canadian Forces Headquarters by a civilian-dominated National Defence Headquarters.

Rather than increasing its education level and becoming more conversant and comfortable with civilian management technologies and civilian society in general, the Canadian Forces descended into what one observer has called a state of “moral panic” over a perceived imposition of incompatible civilian values on the military. This led to decades of resistance to the expansion of legislatively and constitutionally guaranteed rights and the inclusion of women, minorities and members of the LGBTQ2 community in the military.⁶³ In the opinion of Horn and Bentley, “many of the senior leadership fell back on their underlying culture, namely secrecy and stone-walling outside criticism.”⁶⁴

This top-down hierarchical approach drove army planning during the 1970s and 1980s. Its System Study, aimed at redesigning the army to reflect perceived requirements, started with a solution dictated before any study was done—that infantry would be the primary arm that the others would serve. It was also premised on the assumption that Canada would field an entire army corps when it struggled to project even a single brigade during much of the period. The army’s indulgence in magical thinking ended only in 1994 when the colonels collectively revolted at the Army Doctrine and Tactics Board and refused to write a full set of doctrinal publications to support it.⁶⁵

⁶² Peter Feaver, *Armed Servants: Agency, Oversight and Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Feaver argues for an agency theory of civil-military relations in which the military agent works for the civilian principal. When an agent follows the principal’s direction they are said to be “working,” when they refuse or avoid following direction they are “shirking.”

⁶³ Stephan D. Flemming, “The Civilianization Theory of Civil-Military Relations: They Have Met the Enemy and He is Us” (MA Thesis, Carleton University, 1989), 45-47.

⁶⁴ Horn and Bentley, *Forced to Change*, 76.

⁶⁵ Kasurak, *A National Force*, 214.

The failure to pursue the model of professionalism represented by Rowley led to professional failure and then collapse in Somalia.⁶⁶ While it might be too bold to state that if Rowley's collective reforms had been implemented, Somalia might have been avoided, its possibility would have been materially reduced. In addition, the government and the Canadian Forces' own reactions to Somalia recognised at least the degraded officer corps and the need to develop higher level strategic thinking in the officer corps. Understanding why Rowley failed and the cost of failure is perhaps more important than understanding successful reforms that have been accomplished since.



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⁶⁶ David J. Bercuson, "Up from the Ashes: The Re-professionalization of the Canadian Forces After the Somalia Affair," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, 3 (2009): 31-39.