

## Guest Editorial

### I Am Proud To Be In The Military

*Major-General Alain Forand, CMM, SC, MSC, CD*

*National Planning Group Y2K*

---

**T**he editor gave me carte blanche to write on any topic I wanted. I decided, therefore, to take this opportunity to express the great pride and honour I have always felt as a member of the Canadian Forces, working with men and women who, in spite of the difficulties and obstacles they meet, in spite of budget restrictions, red tape and more and more increasingly dangerous assignments, for which they too often do not receive due recognition, have always responded to their challenges brilliantly and professionally.

I may be biased; in fact, I am definitely biased. But I am convinced that no other profession is more noble, more challenging or demands more self-denial than the military profession. Those men and women who are always ready to answer the call to defend their nation's citizenry, ideals and interests are a significant asset to their country. History proves this assertion to be true and there is absolutely no doubt that it will remain so in the future.

The members of the military with whom I have had the honour of serving, those who, like me, chose to serve their country, have been my inspiration throughout my career. All of these members have left their mark on me in a number of ways and I have always appreciated their support, their advice, their patience and their loyalty. Over the years, I have never ceased to be impressed by their commitment, their professionalism and their dedication.

I also believed, all these years, that the mission the military is called upon to perform is so vital, that success is always the only option. Be it defending Canada from an external menace, or getting the job done in the midst of a crisis or catastrophe, the military has been and continues to be the resource of last and ultimate resort. Not achieving the aim is synonymous with disaster for there is no one available beyond us to pick up the slack. That sense of the importance of the military's call to duty of being there when the situation is critical and when there is no one left to call is as strong now as it was back when I joined, if not stronger.

Since 1990, we have dispatched our soldiers on national and international missions that are more dangerous and at a rate that is more relentless than in any other period in history, excluding the two world wars and the Korean War.

*"... I am convinced that no other profession is more noble, more challenging or demands more self-denial than the military profession."*

Our soldiers have successfully completed all of these missions. You only have to ask the people from the South Shore, the Saguenay, Southern Manitoba, Northern and Central Bosnia, Southern Croatia, Cambodia, Haiti or, more recently, from the Central African Republic; they will bear witness to this. Canadian soldiers have proved that they are a match for any soldiers in the world when it comes to professionalism, skills, dedication, determination, effectiveness, pride and courage. Because of our unassuming natures and, sometimes, I must confess, our ineptness, we have problems informing people of all the good work we do. The reality is that Canadian soldiers, both Regulars and Reservists alike, have performed with distinction in more military operations since 1990 than any other soldiers! I am totally convinced that Canadian soldiers are the best in the world and I would not want to go into battle with any other soldiers at my side.

I am very proud when I see our young soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers alike, proudly sporting four or five medals commemorating the role they played in as many missions, but I cannot stop thinking about the huge sacrifices they and their loved ones have made. Members of the military are exhausted and no wonder! However, in spite of this fatigue, we have always managed to find the energy needed to carry out the next mission by telling ourselves that making that extra sacrifice was part and parcel of our profession

I feel sure that there is no need for me to recite the litany of incidents currently bedevilling the Canadian Forces and the Army. It appears that it will be some time before they stop making the headlines.

It is evident that one of our biggest challenges is that of dealing with the current social environment. The Army has had to keep pace with the pressures brought on by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, access to information, gender equality, ethnic integration, linguistic parity and a raft of similar modern social yardsticks. We are an important part of Canadian society, and we represent what is right and good about our country at home and abroad.



---

[\[Français\]](#)