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Introduction by John Ferris

**Isabel Campbell. *Unlikely Diplomats: The Canadian Brigade in Germany, 1951-64.***

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## **Contents**

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Introduction by John Ferris, The University of Calgary .....	2
Review by Scott Bertinetti, U.S. Army War College .....	7
Review by Ruth Compton Brouwer, King's University College, Western University .....	10
Review by Kim Richard Nossal, Queen's University .....	13
Author's Response by Isabel Campbell, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters .....	16

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## Introduction by John Ferris, The University of Calgary

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### *A Canadian Cold War?*

The reviewers of this work approach it from different angles, as scholars of contemporary strategy, Canada and transnational history, and Canadian foreign policy. Scott Bertinetti, Ruth Compton Brauwer, and Kim Richard Nossal find *Unlikely Diplomats: The Canadian Brigade in Germany, 1951-64* excellent and original, in different ways. So do Robert Bothwell and Galen Perras, the Canadian military and diplomatic historians who blurbed the book. As a strategic historian, a Canadian but not a Canadianist, I think *Unlikely Diplomats* essential to Canadian historians, and valuable to anyone interested in the Cold War.

That scholars from such different perspectives should praise this book is as surprising as the volume itself. *Unlikely Diplomats* begins by discussing how a small power tried to formulate grand strategy; assesses how Canadian decision-makers defined national interests and sought to achieve them (and so shape the world) by combining power and politics; and finally turns to the social history of a few thousand soldiers and their families who were garrisoned in a foreign land. The praise reflects the power of Isabel Campbell's research, and of her method, which seeks to integrate military, economic, and foreign policies into the study of strategic policy. That method is not often applied to any state, let alone a small one. Because *Unlikely Diplomats* is a subversive work of international and strategic history, perhaps more than the author intended, Campbell also illuminates bigger themes and countries. Like Sally Marks's *Innocent Abroad*, it studies diplomacy from below, expressing the perspective of polities which their betters think should speak only when spoken to.<sup>1</sup> Nor does Campbell view strategy and power as strategic and international historians usually do, just from the position of statesmen. She also does so from a subaltern stance, focused on soldiers, seen as husbands and fathers, on military families, wives and children—topics ignored by social historians. Her analysis of policy makes room for the role of love. This approach takes courage, academically speaking.

Campbell emphasises the paradoxes surrounding Canada's role in The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), intentions uneffected and effects unintended. She inspires all of the reviewers to make incisive comments stemming from the idea of paradox. Kim Nossal is right to criticise her tendency to describe these paradoxes through the phrase "the unbearable lightness of military being," but the observations themselves are acute. They also can be extrapolated, to illuminate the Cold War from an unusual perspective. These paradoxes stem from the relationship between four issues: weak states in the international system; their individual strategies, with Canada serving as an example; preparations for high intensity conventional warfare in a nuclear world; and the nature of NATO.

The academic study of weak states in power politics is even weaker than its topic. The best work in the literature on international relations remains a forty-year-old, though useful, book by Michael Handel.<sup>2</sup> Historians routinely discuss weak powers in individual terms, but rarely treat them as a general phenomenon. Historians often deny that small powers can have grand strategies, because weakness prevents them from executing intentions or defending vital interests through their own resources. As Williamson Murray argues,

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<sup>1</sup> Sally Marks, *Innocent Abroad: Belgium at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (University of North Carolina Press, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Michael Handel, *Weak States in the International System* (London: Frank Cass, London, 1981).

“grand strategy is a matter involving great states and great states alone. No small states and few medium-size states possess the possibility of crafting a grand strategy.”<sup>3</sup> That claim holds some truth, but not all of it. Collectively, weak states shape international systems, perhaps more than any great power does. That effect usually is seen as a condition for events, rather than a cause of them. In fact, weak states shape power politics through their own actions, not just by enabling those of great powers. Individually, weak states may define strategic policies and coordinate their military, economic, and diplomatic resources so to defeat attacks by great powers, like Finland in 1940. Occasionally, weak states drive great issues, as Belgium and Serbia did in 1914. That weak polities rarely do as Thucydides suggested they should-- what they must, against what they wish-- is an overlooked element in international relations. It was fundamental to NATO, which joined one great power, several strong but secondary ones, and many small states, all of which fluctuated in capacity. A clash between the hegemon's efforts to make the weak follow its will, and by the latter to harness their leader, drove NATO. Victory did not always go to the strong.

All states, strong or weak, approach strategic issues in distinct ways. The Canadian politician Lucien Bouchard once said that Canada was not a real country. When it comes to foreign policy, he was almost right. Canada is not a normal country. Canada does not need to defend its vital interests through power, nor could it, because of the central factor in its geopolitics, proximity to the United States. Canada does not use its military to pursue national interests directly, not even in the emblematic case of 1939. Instead, Canadians loan these forces to some international organization, be it the British Empire, the United Nations, or NATO, which they think can maintain a liberal political and economic order across the world. Since 1945, the Canadian government has sought to stand on guard for liberalism, and to do its bit to sustain a world order which it thinks is good, and good for itself. Contradictory reflexes drove these policies. Canadians like to ride the international system for free. They define their interests as being those of the world. They adopt a stance of moral superiority toward their hegemon, while being hypersensitive to slights. Canada is an unpredictable friend, unless constrained by commitments. Canadians are reluctant to undertake commitments, until driven by circumstances, when no options are good. Committing Canadians is hard, but when committed, they honour those commitments, at the price of sacrifice. A constant problem in Canadian strategy is to judge intention and effect: Canada has effect without agency, and intention without instrumentality.

The Canadian brigade reached Europe at a peculiar moment of military history, and remained through another. In the 1950s, one still could conceive of conventional wars being conducted like the Normandy invasion during 1944. Nuclear weapons were built to fight wars, not just to deter them.<sup>4</sup> Hope rose that conventional forces with tactical nuclear weapons might win high intensity war. During the 1960s, it became clear that to use nuclear weapons in conventional war would wreck the armies and their battlefield, a.k.a. Europe, while in strategic terms they could not achieve victory or any rational policy, except deterrence. The Warsaw Pact also posed a conventional threat, which NATO overestimated. Until the end of the Cold War, the United States and its allies found these problems hard to solve. Every option required deterrent credibility, which meant the display of nuclear and conventional force, and political cohesion. NATO never solved the

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<sup>3</sup> Williamson Murray, *The Making of Grand Strategy, Policy, Diplomacy and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Kaplan, *To Kill Nations, American Strategy in the Air-Atomic Age and the Rise of Mutually Assured Destruction* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2015).

problem of conventional weakness. It always divided politically over what to do militarily.<sup>5</sup> During the crisis between 1976-82, for example, Washington sought to have NATO build enough conventional and nuclear power to show that aggression at any level of force would fail, making attack impossible unless Moscow embraced the unthinkable. Meanwhile, the United States surreptitiously pursued the possibility that a nuclear war in Europe might be contained there, just one rung below the last level of escalation, sparing North America and the USSR. In order to achieve these ends and raise the nuclear threshold, the United States sought to make its allies boost their conventional strength. The allies sought to avoid the cost of that approach by having the United States deploy theatre-level nuclear weapons in Europe, so matching Soviet growth in such forces, checking the adventurism in its policy, and ensuring that any armageddon in Europe would spread to the United States and the USSR. These deployments caused public opposition to NATO, threatening the political core of the alliance.<sup>6</sup> Since western leaders did not understand how the Soviets saw strategy and power, moreover, none of these nice calculations about levels of escalation might have worked quite as hoped.

Ultimately, however, political cohesion and nuclear power saw NATO through the Pact's collapse. The latter found strategy easy to dictate but politics hard to control, and thus disintegrated. NATO found strategy hard to formulate, but politics easy to practice. So long as NATO succeeded politically, its failures with strategy need not be fatal. Political unity yielded deterrent credibility. Divisions over strategy might even reinforce political cohesion more than they damaged it, by driving all members into a common discussion. These issues cannot be understood without looking at small powers, where the Canadian experience illuminates that of NATO as a whole. Canada sent ground and air forces to Europe for political reasons, to reinforce the nerve of European states and to influence their strategy. For forty years these forces strengthened political links within the west, and thus the deterrent credibility of NATO, with an effect impossible to measure, or to ignore. Equally, and ironically, they bound Canada to NATO, limiting its ability to weaken political links within the west. When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau challenged the Canadian presence in Europe, he found it was one of the few things Europeans valued about Canada, while the problem with commitments is that they commit you. He disliked the words to the old song, 'we're here because we're here because we're here because we're here,' but still he pirouetted to the tune.

Isabel Campbell illuminates this experience, and the interrelationship between diplomacy and military matters in Canadian policy, by discussing the sharp and the soft ends of the Canadian commitment to Europe. Canadian forces were sent to Europe purely as a tool of policy. They initially fulfilled this expectation, becoming militarily useful and then nuclear tipped, until horrified Canadian politicians and soldiers understood the consequences. Canada thereafter maintained good but tiny forces as a trip wire, operationally, and a political hostage. The presence of Canadian and American forces in Europe limited their countries' ability to evade a nuclear exchange—one reason why European states wanted them there. Meanwhile, these forces changed their nature, driven not by Canadian policy, but its society. The personal demands of military families and other civilians who accompanied them, like teachers, created a strange commitment. The

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<sup>5</sup> John Duffield, *Power Rules: The Evolution of NATO's Conventional Force Posture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995); William Park, *Defending the West: A History of NATO* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1986); Jane Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960* (Palgrave Macmillan 1988).

<sup>6</sup> Terry Terriff, *The Nixon Administration and the Making of U.S. Nuclear Strategy* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1995).

creation of a microcosm of Canadian society under a nuclear shadow in Europe, experienced by hundreds of thousands of Canadians over forty years, made military force into a form of politics by unusual means.

This commitment had paradoxical consequences, some of them perverse. It also failed to achieve any of the aims Canada linked to the decisions to despatch the brigade, such as gaining greater economic access in Europe, or a special relationship with Germany. These aims, however, were overoptimistic—such forms of linkage rarely have succeeded in Canadian foreign policy, and routinely fail when attempted by great powers. Meanwhile, the alternatives were unpalatable. Between 1945 and 49, Canada's single handed attempts to influence power politics in Europe failed, while it could not escape the consequences of crisis there. Canada's decision to participate in collective security across the Atlantic solved two problems at once-- how to conduct an effective and independent foreign policy, and how to help Europeans save themselves-- at the price of a military commitment to Europe. In doing do, Canada combined agency and instrumentality, cause and effect, better than it usually does in foreign policy. NATO was a successful alliance, and unusually egalitarian, from the perspective of small powers. For 40 years NATO was the central commitment for Canada, where it did its bit. NATO was the venue where Canada best played its vaunted role as middle power, pursued its way of strategy, and balanced between the United States and other powers. Historians of Canadian diplomacy misconstrue the significance of NATO because they see it as a military phenomenon, rather than the political one that it was, the forum where Canada was best heard on the issues most central to western security, through unlikely diplomats. Military officers in NATO headquarters exerted as much influence for Canada as did the Department of External Affairs anywhere else, in both cases for visions of the common good, rather than narrow national interest. The decline in NATO's role in the world since 1991 has driven that of Canada. Campbell's work is a fundamental step toward understanding these phenomena.

#### **Participants:**

**Isabel Campbell** is an historian with the Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario. A former archivist, she has published on declassification, Canadian naval history, the Canadian brigade in Europe, alliance strategy, and the Cold War. She is currently co-authoring the official history of the Royal Canadian Navy, 1945 to 1968 and beginning research on the official history of the Royal Canadian Air Force during the same period. The views she expresses here are her own and do not represent the official views of the Canadian government.

**John Ferris** is Professor of History at The University of Calgary. He holds an MA (1980) and a Ph.D. (1986) in War Studies from King's College, London. He works in the fields of military, diplomatic, intelligence and international history, and strategic studies. He has published over 100 academic articles and book chapters, and is author of *The Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919-1926* (Macmillan Press and University of Cornell Press, 1989), *Intelligence and Strategy, Selected Essays*, (Routledge, 2005) and (with C. Archer, H. Herwig and T. Travers) *A World History of Warfare* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002). He also is editor of *The British Army and Signals Intelligence During the First World War* (Army Records Society, 1992) and (with Ewan Mawdsley) *The Cambridge History of the Second World War, Volume I, Fighting the War*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015).

**Colonel Scott Bertinetti** is a faculty instructor in the Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, USA. An Army Strategist, he recently completed his Ph.D. course work in history at Texas A&M University and is completing his dissertation,

“Making the Enduring Commitment: The Deployment of U.S. Army Combat Divisions to Germany, 1950-1954.”

**Ruth Compton Brouwer** is Professor of History Emerita, King's University College, Western University, London, Canada. She received her Ph.D. from York University, Toronto, in 1987. She is the author of books on Canadian women missionaries and on secular humanitarians in the non-Western world, most recently *Canada's Global Villagers: CUSO in Development, 1961-86* (UBC Press, 2013), as well as numerous articles presented and published in Canada and internationally. Her current project is a distinct turn from the global to the local: the background and life of a utopian community on Prince Edward Island in the early twentieth century.

**Kim Richard Nossal** is professor of political studies at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. He is the author of a number of works on Canadian foreign and defence policy, including *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy*, the fourth edition of which, co-authored with Stéphane Roussel and Stéphane Paquin, will be appearing in the summer of 2015. At present he is writing a book with Jean-Christophe Boucher on the domestic politics of Canada's Afghanistan mission.

**Review by Scott Bertinetti, U.S. Army War College**

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This is an important study in understanding the machinations of Cold-War politics from a non-superpower's point of view. Isabel Campbell's *Unlikely Diplomats: The Canadian Brigade in Germany, 1951-64*, is more than a narrative describing the Canadian role in Germany during the Cold War. It is a story of international politics, the North American commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which highlights the fact that individual national interests are a reality within alliances, no matter the size of the nation. The book brings to light the diplomatic and economic aspects that members of NATO considered in terms of both national and alliance objectives. While NATO attempted to portray itself as a seamless organization—with all the contributing members acting in concert with one another—Campbell assures the reader that NATO and its member nations did not always function as a well-honed machine.

The early military role of members of NATO in the defense of Western Europe remains a rich topic for historians to explore. Campbell uses the 27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade Group (CIBG) as the focal point, but looks beyond its simple military contributions to assess the political and economic considerations of the Canadian government when deploying the Brigade to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Campbell's central question explores why Canada decided to send the Brigade to Germany in 1951, a half-decade after withdrawing its forces at the end of the World War II. Throughout the book, Campbell explores the question by examining the political dialog both in Canada and internationally. The initial chapters provide the setting for Canada's global position following both World Wars: Campbell highlights the lack of a voice for smaller nations such as Canada amongst the great powers. A vital part of *Unlikely Diplomats* exposes Canadian internal government disagreements regarding the role of the Canadian Army in terms of its size and its composition. Throughout the book, Campbell provides insightful analysis of the disagreements within the NATO alliance while skillfully explaining how the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG established itself as a viable and contributing force that would endure in Europe until the end of the Cold War.

Her thesis is built on three themes or paradoxes interwoven into six succinct chapters. The Canadian desire for separation from the Crown as an independent nation (with its own foreign policy objectives, included maintaining an independent voice unencumbered by Canada's history with Britain) forms the first paradox. This desire for political independence was particularly important for the Canadian government in international and regional forums. Ironically, the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG—the unit meant to establish Canada's separation from Britain—was assigned to the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) during its initial deployment on the recommendation of U.S. Army General Dwight Eisenhower, the first NATO military commander. Once assigned to the BAOR, the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG found itself at odds over British support and accommodations. As much as Canada sought independence within the international arena, Campbell describes the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG's stationing in the British Zone in the context of their desire for an individual identity. They were Canadian, and many of the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG's soldiers took exception to being identified as British—although Campbell notes that the Canadians' decision to continue wearing British uniforms did not help in establishing them as a distinct nation. As Campbell argues, the direct threat the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG had to address did not come from the Soviets, but rather from the BAOR, in the form of “different ideas about lifestyle, class, and money” (101). As Campbell notes, the Brigade's interactions amongst German civilians and the British were not always positive.

The seeming paradox of deterring nuclear weapons with conventional forces constitutes the second theme in Campbell's analysis, and helps explain the challenges NATO members faced regarding the costs associated

with maintaining standing, combat-ready forces. As Campbell notes, those costs were the source of numerous debates within the Canadian government, with some factions arguing for maintaining the Brigade's presence in Germany and others supporting funds for territorial defense. Further complicating the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG's assigned role in NATO was that many Canadian political and military leaders did not believe that the Soviets would attack Western Europe. Both conclusions provide strong evidence for Campbell's assertions that the Brigade's deployment was for far more than military purposes.

The third theme or paradox emphasizes Canada's approach to security via economic agreements and participation in international organizations. Following World War II, the Canadian government sought to improve its economic and political standing by "emphasizing the importance of non-military methods for promoting world peace" (27). And yet the reality, as Campbell establishes, was exactly the opposite. Canadian leaders hoped that the deployment of the Brigade would open economic doors within Europe by establishing Canada's contribution to NATO security. Campbell invests significant effort in explaining the direct relationship Canada sought with the Federal Republic of Germany and Konrad Adenauer, its first Chancellor.

Although Campbell makes explicit these three themes, *Unlikely Diplomats* contains an unmistakable fourth: identity. The Canadian desire for an equal voice in international forums and amongst the major powers (Great Britain in particular) is evident throughout. The issue of identity arises again in the latter half of the book during the examination of French Canadians in the armed forces (along with a consideration of the advantages of being multi-lingual on the global stage). Significantly, Campbell highlights the family members who chose to join their spouses in Germany. The Canadian government did not provide resources for family members, who often found themselves living in substandard quarters.

Campbell organizes the book topically into six chapters, (such as "Canada's Vision for Germany and Europe" and "The Troop Experience in Germany") that unfold chronologically. Since *Unlikely Diplomats* is more than the story of the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG's deployment to Germany, the book's organization helps describe both Canada's national and international considerations in sending a Canadian infantry brigade to Germany. Campbell's extensive use of primary sources encompasses Canadian government meeting minutes, Canadian Cabinet conclusions, Canadian House of Commons debates, and official correspondence. Additionally, Campbell includes correspondence between the United Kingdom High Commissioner and the German Chancellor. Campbell ranges beyond history and economics (standard fields in any Cold War study) to include social and cultural aspects that augment the study. She blends the disciplines into a coherent narrative, piecing together a complex story that is largely misunderstood and undervalued.

This is an excellent book detailing the early decision to support NATO's military requirements during the first fifteen years of the alliance. The period of study is ambitious, but the work succeeds due to the organization, cross-disciplinary approach, and clear prose. The lack of military terminology facilitates a clear understanding of the political and military events that unfolded in Canada and Europe. While *Unlikely Diplomats* does not contain maps of where the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG was located in Germany, Campbell's style enables the reader to follow the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG's initial deployment and temporary positions in Germany while maintaining a strategic awareness. The index is thorough. Tables describe Canadian-German Trade and export and import comparisons between the United States, Canada, and the Federal Republic of Germany. That data helps explain the evolution of the economic objectives and the results of political and economic policy envisioned by the Canadian government. *Unlikely Diplomats* is an important extension on two important works in the field addressing the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG. The first, Peter Kasurak's *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*, explores the Canadian Army's role from the middle until the end of



the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> The second, Sean Maloney's *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993*, is a history of the 27<sup>th</sup> CIBG from its inception through the end of the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> Though both Kasurak's and Maloney's works examine the Canadian role in NATO's defense of Europe, Campbell's book will find an enthusiastic audience amongst readers and scholars who are particularly interested in understanding Canadian politics and how political decisions played out for soldiers, families, and the Canadian Army in the early Cold War. *Unlikely Diplomats* also provides a useful template for scholars to examine regional actors tied up in the Cold War bi-polar world.

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<sup>1</sup> Kasurak, Peter C. *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Maloney, Sean M. *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993*. Whitby, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1997.

**Review by Ruth Compton Brouwer, King's University College, Western University**

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Isabel Campbell's *Unlikely Diplomats: The Canadian Brigade in Germany, 1951-64* resists easy historiographical classification. During the last few decades, scholars of Canada's role on the international stage have made a striking and much-noted shift of focus from the country's links with Britain, the United States (U.S.), and Europe to its multi-faceted engagements with the Global South and East. That shift, in turn, has resulted in more of a focus on non-state actors. Campbell's book thus seems to be part of an earlier historiographic moment in writing Canada's international history. And yet, as suggested in comments by the scholars Robert Bothwell and Galen Perras, both quoted on the book's back cover, *Unlikely Diplomats* breaks new ground. Bothwell's and Perras's emphasis is on the book's contribution to military historiography. As her title signifies, however, Campbell is by no means exclusively concerned with the military aspects of Canada's brigade in Germany. The title of the 2000 doctoral thesis that preceded the book is even more revealing: "Harmony and Dissonance: A Study of the Influence of Foreign Policy Goals on Military Decision-Making With Respect to the Canadian NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1964."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Campbell devotes considerable space to the place of families in the brigade's overseas experience. Families mattered not only to men in uniform but also to government decision-making on what turned out to be burgeoning military expenditures driven by personnel costs.

That Canada had a garrison serving in Germany as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) from the mid-twentieth century until after the end of the Cold War is not something that instructors in standard courses in Canadian history are likely to have thought or taught much about unless they had kin or acquaintances who served there or perchance themselves grew up on German bases as so-called 'army brats.' Standard textbooks invariably refer to Canadians' much-vaunted role as peacekeepers, but they make little or no reference to the brigade. Even academics teaching courses on Canada's overseas roles do not have access to much substantive detail on the topic, though such scholars as David Bercuson and J. L. Granatstein contend that the brigade made significant contributions to NATO, particularly in the early and middle 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, an examination of Campbell's bibliography suggests that the only book-length work on the Canadian brigade in Germany is Sean Maloney's *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993*, an undocumented account commissioned to narrate and celebrate its history.<sup>3</sup>

What does *Unlikely Diplomats*, with its close-grained topical and temporal focus, offer to scholars who (like this reviewer) are without expertise in either military or diplomatic history but who nonetheless have a broad interest in Canada's historic role on the international stage? The answer is a qualified 'quite a lot.' In her

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Isabel Catherine Campbell, "Harmony and Dissonance: A Study of the Influence of Foreign Policy Goals on Military Decision-Making with Respect to the Canadian NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1964," Ph.D. thesis, Laval University, 2000

<sup>2</sup> David J. Bercuson, "Canada, NATO, and Rearmament, 1950-1954: Why Canada Made a Difference (but not for very long)," in John English and Norman Hillmer, ed., *Making a Difference: Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order* (Toronto: Lester Publishing Limited, 1992), 103-24, and J. L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 311, 340, 349-50.

<sup>3</sup> Sean M. Maloney, *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997).

Introduction, Campbell outlines her three broad themes: the Canadian government's chronic, and frustrating, inability to influence Western decision-making about international security, notwithstanding its wartime and postwar contributions; the impact of on the Canadian brigade of nuclear deterrence as a primary postwar Western strategy; Canada's emphasis on "non-military means of enhancing international security," including "measures to improve solidarity and cohesion and to encourage a high quality of life" (2). As shown in Chapter 1, at the end of the Second World War Canada had no formal input into the peace settlement or into occupation policies. This lack of any effective voice, together with the government's domestic commitments and the restiveness of its overseas troops, stiffened Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King's unwillingness to contribute Canadian soldiers to an occupation role in Germany. Nor was King alone among his colleagues in resisting pressure for Canadian contributions to postwar peace efforts so long as Canada had no say in planning. As King's Parliamentary Secretary, Brooke Claxton had resented British pressure to have Canada subsumed into a single Commonwealth entity in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). And in 1948 as Defence Minister he successfully opposed a Canadian contribution of aircraft for Britain's use in the Berlin Airlift on the principle of no commitment without representation (44).

And yet in 1951, the 27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade, initially drawn mainly from militia units, was sent to Germany, where it was to serve, at the suggestion of Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight Eisenhower, under the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR), which functioned both as an integrated NATO force and an occupation force. The dispatch of the brigade, Campbell makes clear, did not follow automatically from Canada's becoming a founding NATO member in 1949. Indeed as late as September 1950 King's successor as Prime Minister, Louis St. Laurent, was still maintaining that Canada's most effective contribution to the strengthening of European security in the wake of the outbreak of the Korean War would be in the form of arms and equipment. It was only at the end of the year and under extreme pressure from the North Atlantic Council that St. Laurent reluctantly agreed to send a brigade group and a fighter squadron as deterrent forces to Europe. Campbell's ongoing emphasis in the first third of her book on Canadian political, and even, at times, military leaders as reluctant postwar allies helps counter a once-strong historiographic tendency to depict the elderly King as a drag on younger colleagues who were eager to become actors on the international stage.

Before it left Canada for Germany, the Brigade was tutored in comportment and in the kind of factual information and attitudes it was presumed to need in order to win the hearts and minds of Germans and thus inoculate them against backsliding into regressive nationalism or succumbing to the lure of Communism. It was what Campbell calls the beginning of a diplomat-soldier role for the Canadian forces (93). Aspects of the soldiers' backgrounds, including a low level of education and sometimes unsavoury pasts (convicted criminals could join up), militated against early success in the diplomat role, as did conditions on the ground. A particularly hospitable German who arranged visits with local families for the lonely Canadians during their first Christmas there turned out to be a well-connected ex-Nazi. Prostitutes were easy to come by, thanks in part to the Canadians' good pay relative to that of their British counterparts. The barracks at Hannover, where the Canadian troops were posted until 1953, were barren and bleak. And until that year there was no provision for families to join their men. Over time and in ad hoc fashion, the facilitation of family life came to be considered as worth the substantially extra cost to the Canadian military, since it was anticipated that it would improve morale and comportment, as well as retention rates. The latter was a particular concern in regard to building up the regular force and retaining experienced and well-trained officers. To the extent that the arrival of families and the construction of such facilities as skating rinks and schools were meant to reassure the West German population about the Canadians' confidence in, and commitment to, European

security, it was an element in foreign policy. Nevertheless, Campbell insists, it was military families themselves who led the way: even in 1952, some had come to Germany at their own expense. And during the Berlin Crisis a decade later, when the threat of nuclear war seemed more real, brigade families still wanted to remain on the ground and be together. As Campbell shows, the presence of brigade families neither resolved all morale problems nor necessarily improved the Canadians' image in local German communities. Contrary to the mythic image contained in works like Maloney's *War Without Battles*, she contends, Canadian soldiers were not more popular than other foreign troops. Moreover, the suppression of confidential reports such as those written by chaplains, detailing difficulties both within the world of the brigade and in its relations with local communities has "left behind a dubious archival record. . . [that has] led historians to overlook some of the less-pleasant aspects of the experience and to believe that Canadians were somehow better than others" (109-110).

Campbell's penultimate chapter, "The Strategy of Deterrence and Plans for the Canadian brigade, 1948-64," necessarily deals with NATO-wide matters to a greater degree than the three preceding chapters. NATO struggled to maintain an image of solidarity, especially from 1954 onward as member nations grappled with issues related to the planned adoption of tactical nuclear weapons and their place in "operational realities" (162). However necessary at the time, Campbell argues, the felt need to project NATO unity and confidence in order to reinforce solidarity and deterrence has had a harmful effect on the recognition and acknowledgement of internal divisions in subsequent historical analysis. Meanwhile, in Canada, NATO's requirement that member nations acquire nuclear weapons coincided with John Diefenbaker's election as Prime Minister. Campbell's account of the real and perceived pressures on Diefenbaker from NATO and, after 1960, from President John F. Kennedy in regard to the acquisition of nuclear weapons for Canadian forces provides helpful context for understanding the Prime Minister's uncertain and much-criticized course leading up to his 1963 election loss. She notes that in the early 1960s even senior military leaders like the by-then-retired Guy Simonds were opposed to Canada's acquisition of nuclear weapons and sceptical of the very concept of limited tactical nuclear warfare. The Conclusion to her book suggests that Campbell shares that scepticism. "The combat role and the acquisition of nuclear weapons," she writes, "defied logic. Although the Canadian Army still worked hard to have a combat-ready brigade, the brigade's main purpose emphasized its comportment, its relations with the Germans, and its ability to represent Canada in a positive light" (190-91).

While *Unlikely Diplomats* can be read with profit by scholars who are broadly interested in Canada's history of international engagement, it cannot be said to be easy going. Especially for non-military historians it is, in fact, a challenging work, not least because of terminology that the reader struggles to understand from the immediate context. There is no glossary and abbreviations' list such as Maloney included in *War Without Battles*, and there is a dearth of the kind of brief, helpful explanations of terminology that makes Granatstein's *Canada's Army* eminently accessible even for lay readers. In the absence of broad context for often unfamiliar detail, it was frequently a struggle to see the forest for the trees. The criticism embedded in this cliché is without merit, of course, if Campbell intended her book only for military specialists, though even such scholars may have welcomed a more accessible narrative, the support provided by a glossary, maps, and photographs, and a clearer rationale for the book's terminal date.

Such concerns aside, *Unlikely Diplomats* usefully reminds us of a relatively recent and yet already largely unfamiliar aspect of Canada's overseas history. However unnecessary it turned out to have been, for almost half a century Canadians stood on guard in Germany. As Campbell observes, "For a nation of less than 14 million to send six thousand soldiers to Europe in peacetime was no small accomplishment" (149).

**Review by Kim Richard Nossal, Queen's University**

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For over forty years, Canada maintained a sizable armed force in Germany. Deployed there by the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent in 1951 to support the fledgling North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Canadian forces were not withdrawn until the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney announced in February 1992 that to cut costs, the Canadian bases would be closed and the troops returned to Canada. Canada's German deployment was an extraordinary commitment for a relatively small ally. Not only was it expensive, but stationing thousands of troops in peacetime in a foreign country had a powerful and transformative impact on the Canadian Army in particular and the Canadian Armed Forces more generally.

Isabel Campbell, an historian with the Directorate of History and Heritage in Canada's National Defence Headquarters, has provided us with a detailed examination of the first decade of this lengthy deployment. Drawing on a range of documentary sources, she details not only the political/strategic decisions that prompted the St. Laurent government to deploy a Canadian garrison to Europe, but also the impact of the brigade in Germany itself, on Canadian relations with other NATO allies, and on the German civilian population.

The Canadian government despatched the brigade to assist NATO's broader strategy of defending Europe against a putative attack by the forces of the Soviet Union; it was specifically not to be part of the military occupation of western Germany. But regardless of the purpose, the relationship between the Canadian forces and the civilian population was marked by difficulties that are normally associated with garrisoning a foreign military force. While the Canadian government tried hard to ensure that the members of the brigade understood that they should ideally be representatives of Canada, tasked with what in essence was a diplomatic mission—hence the title—dynamics on the ground in the Hannover area at the outset and later in the Soest area later were problematic. Campbell does an excellent job of detailing the challenges faced by a peacetime garrison in suboptimal living conditions.

She also tracks the huge consequences of the efforts of the Canadian government to deal with those challenges, in particular the decision to enable families of those deployed with the brigade to deploy to Germany as well. As Campbell notes, this decision had substantial knock-on effects, not only changing the demographic of the brigade from younger to older soldiers, but also dramatically increasing the costs of the deployment. In addition, the increasing personnel costs had a significant impact on Canadian defence policy writ large, as the percentage of the budget devoted to sustaining a large number of troops and their families in Germany had an impact on the overall military budget. As Campbell notes, "the Canadian government also spent defence dollars on housing, schools, community centres, and skating rinks rather than on weapons in an effort to retain well-behaved and trained volunteer soldiers" (2). In short, as Campbell shows, the deployment had both long-term and profoundly transformative effects on the nature of the Canadian Armed Forces.

But this book is about much more than Canada's "unlikely diplomats" in Germany. It is also about what went on behind the apparent unified front that NATO allies generally presented during this period. Campbell shows the degree to which the allies were invariably driven by parochial interests and perspectives. And some of the disputes that Campbell details between the British and the Canadians in Germany are reminders of how imperial dynamics persisted well into the mid-twentieth century.

Perhaps most importantly, the title does not convey the key lesson of this book: the degree to which the Canadian deployment itself involved a number of paradoxes. Campbell believes that these paradoxes can be best summed up in a phrase she adapts from the title of Milan Kundera's novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.<sup>1</sup> Her adaptation—"the unbearable lightness of military being"—is a constant *leitmotif* in this book, hinting at the existential paradoxes faced by the Canadian military in Germany. Now it can be argued that invoking Kundera in this way not only mucks around with Kundera's brilliantly imaginative title (how does "military being" actually differ from "being"?), but it also inscribes the accumulation of workaday decisions of a series of Canadian government officials with a philosophical heaviness that seems unwarranted in the circumstances.

Yet Campbell is quite right to draw our attention to the paradoxes of the Canadian deployment in Germany. Those who made the initial decisions in the aftermath of the Berlin Blockade and the outbreak of the Korean War would have had little inkling of what their decision would turn into as the 1950s and 1960s wore on. The Canadians in Germany became part of an American "tripwire" that was intended to provide both a deterrent to a Soviet attack on Western Europe, and a reassurance to Europeans that if the Soviets were not deterred, the United States would be fully committed to the defence of Europe.

The difficulty of a tripwire, particularly one that emerges slowly into existence rather than being put there on purpose, is that it involves a particularly paradoxical set of calculations. It involves putting a fighting force in place that is understood to be incapable of actually defending successfully against an attack. Indeed, the very purpose of a great power's overseas tripwire garrison is to be defeated so that its destruction will be avenged by bringing the full weight of the great power to the ensuing fight. But because a peacetime garrison simply will not work if the garrison's soldiers are separated from their families by an ocean, it involves putting the families on the front line too, and thus in harm's way.

But a tripwire, in the context of nuclear deterrence as it evolved during the Cold War, also involves a more profound paradox: these troops were to be deployed, and maintained in position at considerable cost, for a fight that, if deterrence were successful, would never take place.

These paradoxes might not have been apparent to those who oversaw the deployment of the Canadian brigade in the early 1950s, but they became increasingly apparent during the period that Campbell covers. And because a tripwire and its assumptions involve exceedingly difficult decisions for leaders both civilian and military—for example, deploying military formations that one knows in advance do not have the capacity to defend their position should they be attacked; or purposely placing Canadian families in harm's way—it should not be surprising that many Canadian military leaders grew increasingly chary about what had been decided in the early 1950s. But it is a reminder of the power of inertia in policy-making that it was not until the late 1960s that a prime minister—Pierre Elliott Trudeau—emerged who was willing to challenge the assumptions (but only with partial success) and not until the early 1990s, in the aftermath of the Cold War, that a Canadian Prime Minister—Brian Mulroney—felt comfortable enough to bring the deployment to an end.

In sum, in this tightly argued book, Isabel Campbell presents us with a kaleidoscopic view of the first decade of Canada's long deployment in Europe. Superbly researched and engagingly written, it dissects this crucial

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<sup>1</sup> Milan Kundera, *L'insoutenable légèreté de l'être*, trans. François Kérel (Paris: Gallimard, 1984).

policy and offers lessons and insights from a series of decisions in the distant past whose consequences are still being felt today.

## Author's Response by Isabel Campbell, Directorate of History and Heritage, National Defence Headquarters

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First, I must thank the editors of H-Diplo for commissioning this roundtable and John Ferris and the three reviewers for reading my book closely and for writing such thoughtful evaluations of it. Because these assessments will help potential readers understand *Unlikely Diplomats* more easily, I recommend that they ponder the comments above carefully before they embark on the book itself.

As American military scholar Scott Bertinetti observes, my book covers the broad diplomatic and economic aspects of the North Atlantic alliance as well as Canada's role in West Germany during the early Cold War. Although I aspired to reveal the complexity of alliance workings beyond the parochial concerns of one small power, my book just begins to explore the mountain of early Cold-War materials now available to scholars. At a time when journals and books are rising in cost, H-Diplo and other H-Net resources helped me pin-point pertinent works. I am grateful to H-Net for making resources freely available to scholars around the world. Bertinetti rightly discerns that identity is a significant implicit theme of my work; it evolved in part by comparison with the experience of other countries and their militaries. Canada's reluctance to impose conscription upon its population, subsequent policies which developed in order to retain trained soldiers, and aspects of the French Canadian experience, set Canada's forces apart. That said, the American, British, and European scholarship offers cutting-edge contributions on the Cold War which Canadian historians ignore at their peril. I am glad that Bertinetti found my book cogent and helpful rather than a burden to read.

Sean Maloney's and Peter Kasurak's important works on Canada's military and its role in NATO cover much longer time frames.<sup>1</sup> Ruth Compton Brower, a Canadian historian of international relations, flags some contrasts between Maloney's *War without Battles* and *Unlikely Diplomats*. Maloney generously shared some of his original research with me. Many of our differences relate specifically to new releases of materials which were not available when his book was published almost two decades ago. In answer to Brower's question about the rationale for the terminal date of *Unlikely Diplomats*, my cut-off date of 1964 partly reflects my awareness that few alliance documents after 1964 have been released. The historiography of later Cold War suffers from heavy reliance upon incomplete sources. Moreover, between 1964 and 1968 the Pearson government implemented major defence organizational changes and altered personnel policies, cutting and integrating the forces, encouraging bilingualism, and modifying the pay structure. Most of the relevant documents on these 'modernizations' as they were termed are now open; I am investigating them and relating them to broader societal changes in current work related to the navy and to the air force. My view is that the complexities of this period warrant separate close study.

I am grateful that Brower persevered through "unfamiliar details" and made constructive suggestions on how to improve the volume. I have no quarrels with her remarks; I simplified some arguments in the book, leaving out particular controversial ideas, but utilized too specialized a vocabulary.<sup>2</sup> Canadian historians have

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<sup>1</sup> Peter C. Kasurak, *A National Force: The Evolution of Canada's Army, 1950-2000*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013 and Sean M. Maloney, *War Without Battles: Canada's NATO Brigade in Germany, 1951-1993*. Whitby, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1997. A forthcoming critical review of Kasurak's book in *International Journal* highlights some of the differences between our approaches.

<sup>2</sup> I made only passing reference in a footnote to the iconic American feminist Cynthia Enloe and my belief that Canadian military families partly counter-acted the militarization of their lives. Cynthia. *Maneuvers: The International*



utilized defence records for social, labour, gender, race, and family history for decades, but rigorous cross-disciplinary work in these records for the Cold-War period is still in its infancy. She and Bertinetti rightly emphasize the role of families in my work. Far from being mere pawns, I argue that families acted as agents of change in the face of the militarization of their lives. In future work, I am determined to conquer the theoretical debates and the specialized vocabulary of gender and family histories in order to situate new research fully in these literatures. This is a complicated task, but Brower's call for clear prose has not fallen on deaf ears. Apart from my official work, I plan to publish a few short focused pieces – contributing to new historiography and attempting to make the results appealing to general readers.

Brower also highlights my fresh interpretations of the Mackenzie King era. King, Brooke Claxton, the Minister for National Defence, and others voiced sovereignty and legal objections to Canada's involvement in the Berlin air lift during 1948 and 1949. Canada provided food and other supplies, but refused to take part in the air lift. To Lester B. Pearson, the Under-Secretary of State, these objections seemed technical and trivial. Yet a decade later Canada stayed out of Berlin contingency planning because of consideration for international law and occupation rights. The relationship between force and international law remains a vital concern, but perhaps it was more obviously so in the aftermath of the Second World War when German officers were prosecuted for violations of international law while following government orders.

The last reviewer, Kim Nossal, is the foremost Canadian expert on the North Atlantic Alliance, among other topics. He easily grasped and elegantly describes the main themes of my work – especially appreciating the extent to which the Cold War placed Canadian military families in a paradoxical situation. His review highlights aspects of the book such as defence budget priorities and the character of the Canadian Armed Forces which resonate today, when the Canadian government struggles with alliance politics and decisions which impact the lives of people in Canada as well as those in far-flung lands. If, by some measures, Canada's brigade in Germany had little impact, it nonetheless transformed the lives of thousands and thousands of service people and their families in a profound manner. My work barely scratches the surface of those impacts, but I hope that I and other scholars – historians of gender, family, and children will explore these experiences and the records of the Cold War to show more clearly just what those impacts were and how they contributed to the Canada and the world of today.

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*Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives.* (London: University of California Press, 2000) and especially *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives* (London, Pandora Press; San Francisco, Harper\Collins, 1988).