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## Tweeting Strategy: Military Social Media Use as Strategic Communication

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**Tweeting Strategy: Military Social Media Use as Strategic Communication**

by

Rupinder Kaur Mangat

Dissertation submitted to the  
School of International Policy and Governance  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Global Governance  
Balsillie School of International Affairs  
Wilfrid Laurier University

2018

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## Abstract

Many Western militaries now actively engage with various social media platforms. The starting point for my dissertation research was this question: how does the military use social media? Considering the Canadian Armed Forces' use of Twitter as a case study, I collected over 14,000 tweets from four Twitter accounts of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force with some tweets as old as September 2012 and the most recent tweets from December 2015. I employed Grounded Theory Method to analyze these tweets, which revealed four themes — organization, history, preparedness, and partnership. These themes create an image of CAF as a Canadian institution and a military one, as they speak to the many war and other combat operations that the Canadian Armed Forces have engaged in at the behest of the government. A literature review conducted simultaneously with the analysis uncovered the International Relations literature on strategic narratives and the Organizational/Military Studies literature on strategic communication. The main finding is that the Canadian Armed Forces are using social media for the strategic communication of government strategic narratives because the norms of civil-military relations require the military to follow government orders and prevent the military from using social media as intended because social media tend to be political whereas the military has to be “apolitical.” The military, thus, maintains an “apolitical” image by communicating what the government wishes it to communicate, even though the government’s narrative can be political. Government strategic narratives frame organizational strategic communication, while organizational strategic communication supports government strategic narratives.

To my family: Mom, Dad, Biji, Naniji, Nanaji, and Daddy.

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There are many others to whom I owe my gratitude. I am sure that if I mentioned all their names the list would be longer than this dissertation. So, with apologies to the unnamed many, I will end where I started, and say once again, thank you.

“At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.”

– Albert Schweitzer

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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Expanded Form</b>
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff Canada
CFB	Canadian Forces Base
CMR	Civil-Military Relations
DND	Department of National Defence Canada
DND/CAF	Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces
GTM	Grounded Theory Method
ISIS or ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MND	Minister of National Defence Canada
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defense Command
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States of America

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The starting point for my research was this question: How is the military using social media? I found *one* answer at the intersection of the information strategy, strategic narratives, and strategic communication literatures and how they interact with civil-military relations theory. In looking at the military's social media usage, particularly Twitter, I found that the military uses social media for strategically communicating the strategic narratives of the state and the government because the strictures of civil-military relations prevent it from using social media as intended. The military communicates what it is expected to, primarily government strategic narrative(s), in order to maintain the appearance of being apolitical and under civil control. The communication and the narratives are *strategic* because they are intended to gain and retain public support for military missions by persuading the public that the missions fit the strategic narrative — and therefore, the identity — of the state. The narrative exists at the government level, while the communication of it occurs at the organizational level, which in this dissertation is the military.

Militaries from many countries are online, and they maintain a presence across various social media platforms from Facebook and Twitter to LinkedIn and Instagram. Crilley (2016, 51–52) lists five reasons why military social media use is worth analysis: first, social media make media actors out of the military; second, militaries are investing resources into social media, which means they think these media are important; third, understanding war requires accounting for the military's take on conflict (see also Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010); fourth, military social media content is viewed by a large number of people; and fifth, social media allow people to engage with militaries and the content they post. Twitter is also an arena where

geopolitics are being shaped, whether it is a diplomatic exchange between the US and Iran about the release of two US Navy patrol boats that had wandered into Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf in January 2016, or the Arab Awakening (Duncombe 2017; Seib 2012). Table 1 below shows the number of Twitter followers that some of the militaries mentioned above have. Not all followers are going to be citizens or even residents of the state, but the percentage provides an idea of how the number of followers compares to actual population of the state.

State	Twitter Handle	Twitter Followers* (April 2018)	Population** (July 2017)	Followers as Percentage of Population
Australia	<a href="#">@AustralianArmy</a>	35,174	23,232,413	0.15%
France	<a href="#">@armedeterre</a>	145,039	67,106,161	0.22%
Canada	<a href="#">@CanadianForces</a>	90,629	35,623,680	0.25%
United Kingdom	<a href="#">@BritishArmy</a>	220,859	64,769,452	0.34%
United States	<a href="#">@USArmy</a>	1,254,203	326,625,791	0.38%
India	<a href="#">@adgpi</a>	5,478,500	1,281,935,911	0.43%
Israel	<a href="#">@IDFSpokesperson</a>	884,169	8,299,706	10.65%

*Table 1: Number of Twitter followers of military accounts as a percentage of state populations. (Note 1: \* Number of Twitter Followers was collected in April 2018 for the listed Twitter accounts. Some military accounts had a joint account for its armed forces like Israel, some had individual accounts for each environment like Australia and France, and some had both like Canada. For states with joint accounts, I took the number of followers from the joint armed forces account. For states with individual environment accounts, I took the number of followers of the Army accounts.*

*Note 2: \*\* Population data from the CIA Worldbook)*

The number of followers, most of which are under one per cent of total country population, does not capture the impact of these accounts fully because they do not track how these followers interact with these accounts by liking posted content and re-tweeting it to their own networks of followers. Even if the social media influence of militaries is limited, it is worth reviewing militaries' social media use as an organizational practice that requires commitment of

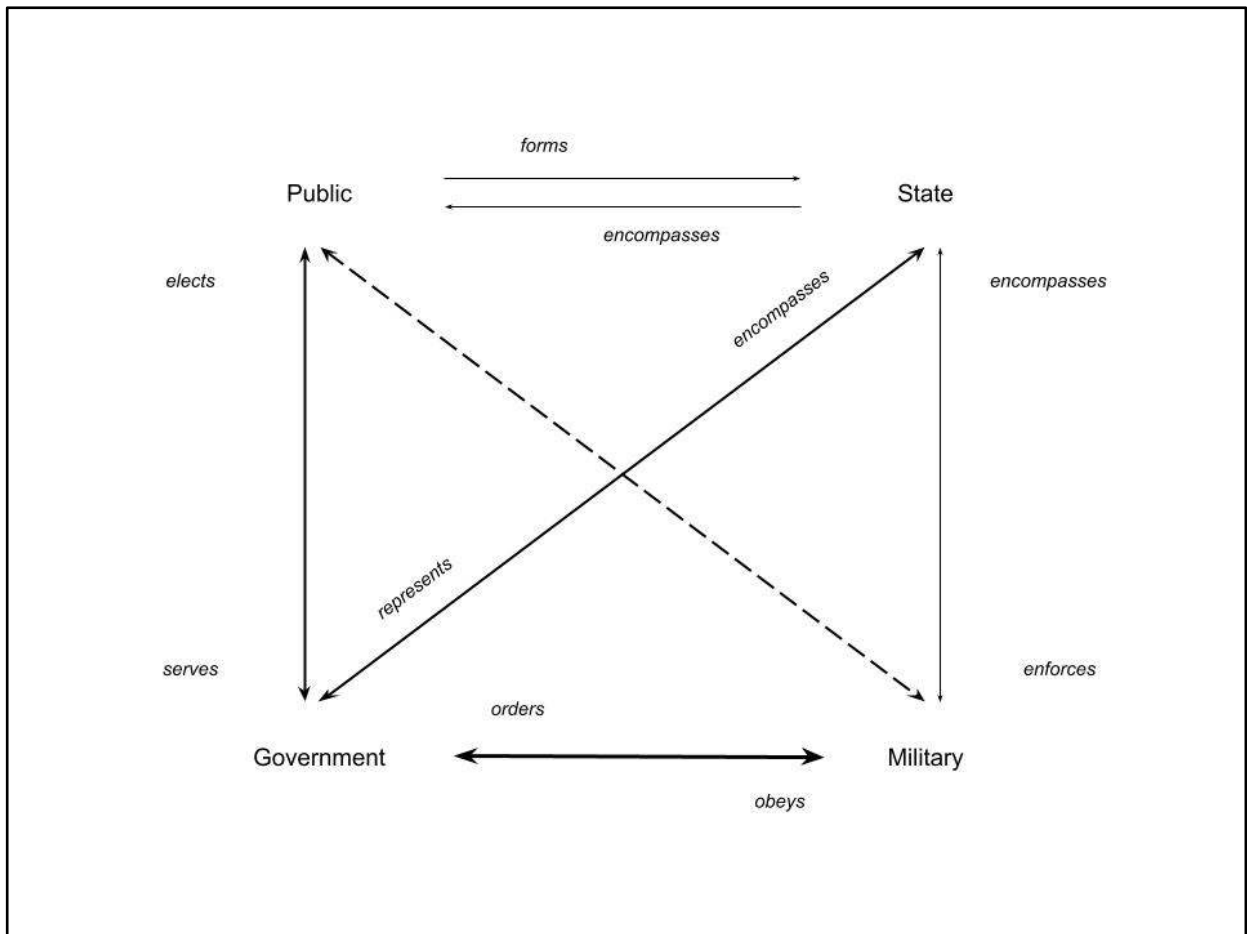
human and material resources in the form of Public Affairs Officers, photographers, and videographers as well as the time and technology devoted to creating content. For instance, Health Canada's Twitter accounts for the health minister — @CDNMinHealth in English and @MinSanteCAN in French — cost more than \$100,000 a year in salaries with the equivalent of 1.5 employees working to issue approximately 50 tweets per month (Beeby 2018). CAF is potentially spending a comparable amount for their Twitter accounts.

There are four entities that are relevant to this dissertation: the state, the government, the military, and the public. The state encompasses political and civil society (Gramsci 2006). The state, thus, is made up of political society which includes institutions and entities such as the government and the military as well as civil society including institutions and entities such as non-government organizations and the public. Government is formed of “the elected civilians who by constitution, law, and custom represent and are responsible and accountable to the sovereign people,” and the military is an organization composed of “any and all persons enrolled by the state in any unit or element of the armed forces” (Bland 2001, 532). The elected officials, the government, the civil authority (or authorities), and the Prime Minister can all be considered synonyms for the state because that is what they are elected by the public to represent. The armed forces, army, air force, navy, etc. are words that can represent the military in whole or in part.

Public is a word used as frequently as it is difficult to define: “Its most common sense is that of the people in general. It might be the people organized as the nation, the commonwealth, the city, the state, or some other community. ... But in each case the public, as a people, is thought to include everyone within the field in question. This sense of totality is brought out in speaking of the public, even though to speak of a national public implies that others exist; there



must be as many publics as polities, but whenever one is addressed as the public, the others are assumed not to matter” (Warner 2002, 49). The domestic public is one of the components of a state, but there are publics outside the state as well. The public in all its meanings touches upon the state and the government in one way or another. See Figure 1 for an illustration of how the relationships between state, government, military, and public are visualized in this dissertation.



*Figure 1: The state encompasses the public, the government, and the military. The public forms the state; the government represents the state; and the military enforces (the boundaries of the) state [Note: The government “enforces” the state in other ways in the international arena]. The public elects the government, and the government serves the public. The government orders the military, and the military obeys [Note: The military advises the government as well, but as per Huntington’s CMR theory, the primary task of the military is to manage violence at the behest of the government]. The public contributes resources — monies, material, and muscle — to the military, and the military defends (and if needed, serves in other capacities) the public. The*

*public-military relationship is amorphous but not insignificant or irrelevant because of the public's relationships with the government and the state as well as the fact that the public provides the resources that make up the military.*

The relationships between the state government, the military, and the public are expressed through communication among these actors in a variety of ways — news coverage, press releases, public events, public policy, elections, protests, letters and calls from members of the public to their elected representatives, and social media messages. For the government, all communication is strategic information-sharing to achieve particular results for the state. The military, as per Huntington's (1957) civil-military relations (CMR) prescriptions, must remain apolitical and under civilian control, which means that it cannot deviate from the government's information sharing strategy. In other words, the military must ideally communicate what the government wants it to communicate. The military social media analysis in this dissertation bears this out: the military uses social media as expected by the government and norms of CMR and not as perhaps intended by the creators and users of social media platforms.

The government's communication is influenced by the state's strategic culture, which is “a set of shared beliefs, and assumptions derived from common experiences and accepted *narratives* (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which influence the appropriate ends and means chosen for achieving security objectives” [emphasis added] (Glenn 2009, 530). Governments and other actors, including the military, use strategic narratives derived from the state's strategic culture to “render their actions both intelligible and legitimate both to themselves and to those they seek to influence” (ibid., 537). The process of sharing the strategic narratives is strategic communication. The government's information sharing is strategic communication, and so is the military's sharing of information that the government expects it to share.

The state's strategic culture, like any other culture, is dynamic, evolving, and open to interpretation, so governments can shape strategic culture by interpreting strategic narratives differently and creating alternative or new strategic narratives about the state's past and present identity (Glenn 2009). The military, along with the government, engages in strategic communication of the security-related strategic narratives in order to legitimize the government's foreign policy decisions with respect to the deployment of the military. Because strategic communication occurs at the organizational level, it allows the military to legitimize itself as a security actor, one that has expertise in the matter of security but is apolitical and under complete civilian control. In looking at how the military uses social media, one of the few spaces where it is supposed to "speak for itself" as an organization, I find that the military still communicates what is expected of it by the government based on state strategic narratives because it is bound by the norms of CMR to do so.

In this dissertation, I focus on the Canadian state. The Government of Canada represents the "civil" in discussions of civil-military relations. The Canadian Armed Forces represent the main military case with some illustrative examples taken from other states' militaries. The public is represented largely by the people of Canada, but also includes those who might have access to the material that CAF posts online, which would potentially include anyone with access to the Internet and knowledge of social media. While Hannay (2005, 15) argues that "the notion of the public is a political one and tied to 'membership' of some identifiable body politic," Warner (2002, 50) notes that a version of public can also come "into being only in relation to texts and their circulation." It is this latter definition that is relevant in this dissertation because the military's public is one that is responsive to military social media presence expressed through posts and tweets. The public, thus, refers to CAF's imagined public

for which it creates social media content to communicate the state and government strategic narratives.

### **The State and the Government**

The state and the government are where strategic narratives arise. According to Weber (1919 as cited in Weber 1994, 310–311), “A state is that human community which (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a certain territory, this ‘territory’ being another of the defining characteristics of the state.” Bounded by its borders and the principle of sovereignty within those borders, the state is also a “relationship of *rule* by human beings over human beings” (ibid., 311). The government is the political body that rules by conducting the affairs of the state. The military relies on the state for its existence, that is, militaries do not exist without state sanction. There may be armed groups such as Al Qaeda or Boko Haram, but they are not considered militaries because they lack formal state backing. As Huntington (1957, 63–64) notes, “Militaries exist when states raise militaries for their security. The state is the progenitor of the military.” The military enforces government strategy vis-à-vis state security, and it also represents state strategic narratives on the international stage.

The state and its public have a reciprocal relationship: the state cannot exist without the public, and the public relies on the state to provide certain common goods such as security, health care, social assistance, etc. Weber (1919 as cited in Weber 1994, 311) noted, “For the state to remain in existence, those who are ruled must *submit* to the authority claimed by whoever rules at any given time.” The public must recognize the authority of the state over itself. Campbell (1998, 10) argues that the state can be understood as having “no ontological

status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality,” that is, its status as the sovereign presence in world politics is produced by “a discourse of primary and stable identity;” and that the identity of any particular state should be understood as “tenuously constituted in time... through a stylized repetition of acts,” and achieved, “not [through] a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition.” What a state needs in order to exist then is the repetitive performance of the strategic narratives that constitute the state’s identity.<sup>1</sup> The performance of state narratives can take many forms — social, cultural, political, economic, or a variety of permutations and combinations of all four. Because it is the public or a government elected by the public that performs the identity of the state through repeating strategic narratives, the state relies on the public.

One of the tasks of the state, if not the most important task and primary goal, is the provision of security for the public (Hobbes 1651 as cited in Hobbes and Morley 1886; Waltz 1959). It is for this task of security provision that institutions like the police and the military are created. The police ensure the rule of law domestically, while the military enforce laws, norms, and resolutions internationally in order to defend the state from external threats. The military also has a role in maintaining domestic order in situations that are beyond the capabilities of the police and other civil institutions. The military communicates the government’s security strategy internationally on behalf of the state.

There is a need to differentiate between the state and the government in order to understand how they are related to the public and the military, and how that relationship affects national security. According to Wright (1942, 819–821), “The government is the group of men

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<sup>1</sup> Castells (2010, 6) defines identity as the “source of meaning and experience” for social actors. Further, he notes that multiple identities exist and can be “a source of stress and contradiction in both self-representation and social action” (ibid.). A state’s identity (or identities) are how the state’s public sees it. For instance, one of Canada’s identities is that of peacekeeper, which is how the Canadian public sees Canada’s role in the international system.

[sic] who decide how the state shall function at a given moment,” while “the state is distinguished ... by its possession of sovereignty or the capacity to make and enforce law within the society ... ultimate control over the life of the individual and of other social entities. The state, or society in its political aspect, may therefore be identified by its claim to a monopoly of human killing and protection from killing.” The government administers the state and is ephemeral to some extent because the parties in power change more easily and more frequently than the state does.

The state is identified by its control over the lives of its people in the name of sovereignty, that is, the state embodies the rights of the government to declare an offensive war or take a defensive stance in response to external threat to its people. It also symbolizes the government’s rights to check and punish those under the state’s jurisdiction. There are institutions internal to the state such as the police and the judiciary that help manage the domestic public through the application of laws. Then, as noted above, there are institutions such as the military that manage threats to the public from other states or non-state actors. Huntington (1957) notes that the main task of the military profession is the management of violence. The government utilizes the powers embodied in the state and those given to it by the people and orders the military to manage violence from external threats that may have negative repercussions for the state along with performing domestic duties that may be greater than what civil authorities can handle.

As the world becomes more networked, the lines between what is inside and what is outside<sup>2</sup> the state have blurred. While the porosity of borders always existed in some measure, it has been exacerbated with the speed and reach of Internet and communication technologies.

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<sup>2</sup> R.B.J. Walker in his book, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, provides a close look at how states exercise sovereignty within and without their borders. The changes that Internet-based communication networks have brought about also have implications for how states exercise their sovereignty.

Power too has shifted from being based mainly on military strength to including information dominance. Wars and conflicts are now more than ever affected by who knows what and when. Information has always had an important role with respect to power, even traditional military fire power, because what one state and its military knew affected how that military fought and whether it survived. With the ease of networking created by the Internet and subsequent innovations such as Web 2.0 and social media, however, the state has been slowly losing the near monopolistic control over information it had (see, for instance, Aas 2007; Betz and Stevens 2011; Deibert 2012, 2013; Deibert et al. 2010; Yang 2014 on how governments struggle to exercise control in cyberspace in a way that does not trample upon citizens' rights). This loss of information control also affects the state's identity and narratives.

The broad reach of social media and other communication technologies as well as the ease of use and access make it possible for many actors to attempt to influence the opinion of the public, which in some cases may mean swaying the public away from the good of the state or challenging state narratives about its own identity. The state's identity, which depends on the public for its ideological and political existence as well as the security of its narratives, is made precarious to varying degrees in cyberspace and on social media. The public's willingness to stand for and defend particular values and narratives of identity — in virtual and nonvirtual spaces — will decide what becomes of the state, whether it retains its identity or is transformed. The state and its government, therefore, must engage with the public in cyberspace and on social media in order to maintain the state's identity.

The government can use war as a means of turning the public's attention outwards and away from contentious domestic issues. War can also become a uniting force in cases where the state's identity is threatened by real and virtual ideological threats, the latter of which are

sometimes delivered via social media. Cyber warfare and social media posts are about more than just distributed denial of service attacks,<sup>3</sup> defaced government websites, or “mere” ideological propaganda; they are about challenging existing state narratives that will change the public’s support for existing systems of governance and/or particular governments. Because the war for the state’s identity is now online, it makes sense for the military to make its presence felt on social media and other online communication platforms.

The international system is the environment within which states exist. Here states are individual entities that are governed by norms and practices of the system and to some degree by international law. This is similar to how citizens exist as individuals within the state, but the difference lies in the fact that there is no government for the international system, no sovereign to direct the actions of the state. The norms and practices of the international system as well as the role that various states play within that system are instead guided by the identity of the state as captured in the narratives of the state.

States’ strategic narratives guide their own behaviours and other states’ responses to them in the international system. As Waltz (1959, 201) notes, “States have no one to ensure their security except themselves. The need for a rational foreign policy is imposed by automatic sanction. Everybody’s strategy depends on everybody else’s.” Narratives also limit the power and behaviour of states insofar as states act as they are expected to act in order to avoid negative consequences such as war or sanctions. Strategic narratives are a combination of how the state wants to be seen in the international system and how other states see it, and unexpected deviations from the strategic narratives can carry costs for states in the international system.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Lau et al. (2000, 2275), “A denial of service attack is characterized by an explicit attempt by an attacker to prevent legitimate users of a [web-based or Internet] service from using the desired resources ... The distributed format adds the ‘many to one’ dimension that makes these attacks more difficult to prevent.” Distributed denial of service attacks prevent users from accessing Internet-based services, and because these attacks are distributed, they come from multiple sources that make fighting them off much more difficult.



## **The Military**

The military relies on the state for its existence because only the state can legitimately sanction the violence that can result from military involvement. Because the state relies on the public to reproduce its identity, then by transitive relation,<sup>4</sup> the military relies on the public for its existence. The military then is an organization that emerges out of a people's need for security from external threat. Some states such as Costa Rica and Liechtenstein do without militaries entirely, while others are concerned about their precarious existence and find that they need a military to ensure their survival. States like Israel, for instance, would likely cease to exist without a military. Most states tend to have a military to protect against external threats. States also use their militaries to improve their international relations by supporting international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

In speaking of the importance of the military to human society, Caforio (2003, 8) points out that humans started out with weapons as their first tools and “the first authority established in the group is that of the military chief; cooperation between humans is imposed as a necessity and social value, especially for the needs of war.” There is something of the military in the origin of the species and its organization into social groups. The military has often played an important role in the formation and dissolution of states. Because of the importance of the military to society, civilian governors have always been wary of the military's power. The Roman political system, for instance, “positively discouraged the growth of experienced and successful generals” (Gat 2006, 314). After World War II, as the Cold War began to take shape,

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<sup>4</sup> In mathematics, a transitive relation describes the condition when A is related to B and B is related to C, which then means that A is also related to C. In the case noted above, the military relies on the state and the state relies on the public, so the military also relies on the public.

the military rose to a more important place in state and international politics because it was the core of the power balance between the two superpowers (Mills 1956).

With the evolution of democratic norms and politicians' concern with military power came the idea of civil-military relations, the central tenet of which is civilian control over the military. Huntington (1957) focused on this *civil-military problematique*: how to maintain government control over the military, when the military has de facto power even though the government has de jure power. The solution was to create a clear distinction between the areas of autonomy and responsibility for government and military: the government listens to the military and decides upon an action, but it retains the right to be wrong; the military advises the government, but it has a duty to follow legal orders even if those orders do not follow military advice. Huntington (1957) was concerned about officers' political shrewdness not only because of the civil-military problematique of the de jure and de facto power imbalance between the civilian government and the military, but also because the nature of politics diverges greatly from the military creed of service before self and the expectations of professional conduct from the military.

The separation of military from society in the name of professionalization can disembed the military from the very society it represents and defends (Scheipers 2014). Polanyi (1944), for instance, notes that as norms, regulations, and laws evolve around the conduct in the market, the latter is further set apart from the norms that govern everyday society, which leads to a disembedding of the market from society. Applying this idea of market disembeddedness to military professionalization shows how separation of the military from the concerns of the rest of society can create a military that does not reflect the society that it represents (see also

Janowitz 1968, 1971; Janowitz and Little 1974). The disembedded military follows government orders, but it does not have any relationship with the public.

A way of bridging the society-military gap would be ongoing communication between these two entities — the public and the military. According to Lasswell (1938, 11), “Civilian unity is ... achieved by a repetition of ideas rather than movements. The civilian mind is standardized by news and not by drills. Propaganda is the method by which this process is aided and abetted.” Bridging the gap between the military and the public can be difficult, particularly because of concerns about public opinion manipulation as the infamy of the concept of propaganda shows. Strategic communication, thus, has to walk the line between persuasion and manipulation as it works to maintain the identity of the state, and the military, through a repetition of strategic narratives.

One of the ways that the military can engage with the public is through social media. By communicating strategically and using the state’s strategic narrative(s) as a touchstone, the military can potentially develop a closer relationship with the public. Desch (2017) notes that the public pays attention to the military during particular times such as sporting events or when soldiers in uniform are present at a location, but for the most part the public is unaware of what the military is doing. This obliviousness is not malicious; it is simply a matter of people being busy living their lives with limited time to commit to knowing about matters of policy. Getting and sustaining the attention of the public is something that nearly all organizations and institutions struggle with when there is no current and/or significant event or issue in the public eye. While this will likely remain a problem without a single permanent solution, social media provide a means for the military to stay in touch with the public at large while also supporting the government and state strategic narratives.

## **The Public(s)**

The public forms the state that forms the military. Modern theories of civil-military relations, however, largely ignore the public component of the Clausewitzian trinity. Clausewitz (1832 as cited in Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret 1989, 89) notes, that there are three tendencies at play in war: irrationality (“primordial violence, hatred, and enmity”); creativity (“the play of chance and probability”); and reason (“instrument of policy”). The public, generally speaking, is associated with the irrational passions that can drive a state to war (ibid.). This is only a general suggestion, of course, because the people can be the voice of reason and the politicians a source of creativity (Villacres and Bassford 1995). The overarching point is that these three tendencies interact with the three actors — the people, the state, and the military — to create instability and unpredictability.

In Canada’s conflict in Afghanistan, the military was clear that *people* were the focal point that must be accounted for during operations. Counter-insurgency (COIN) operations focused on the people of Afghanistan. For instance, Hope (2008, 50) notes, “The people constituted a common ‘centre of gravity’ that we [the Taliban and the Canadian Armed Forces] wrestled over ... Establishing trusting relationships with local authorities and with the people was essential to swaying the centre of gravity to our side.” The government sold the Afghan mission to the domestic population by emphasizing peacebuilding and reconstruction operations (Stein and Lang 2007). What CAF communicated to the Canadian population is not as well explored in the strategic communication literature. While the government’s communication and narratives about military engagements are important, what the military communicates to the domestic public also needs to be analyzed.

### ***Imagined and Realized Public(s)***

The imagined publics of the military may vary based on the content of the information and/or the medium of sharing the information. Anderson (1991, 6) defined the nation as an *imagined* political community that is limited to and sovereign within its borders. The nation existed because people imagined themselves part of this nation along with other members, not all of whom knew each other. The emergence of the Internet and then the World Wide Web allowed people to form communities that were not bounded by time or territorial space, so communities began to form around areas of common interest, including interest in matters such as national security, international security, military history, etc. (Arquilla 2007). The military has to plan its communication strategy based on who it imagines is interested in the organization.

The *realized public* is the public that engages and responds to the military's strategic communication. On social media, the response may come in the form of a like, retweet, share, or comment. It is possible that some people who encounter the military's communication might not engage in a manner that is easy to track like the number of retweets or likes. The accuracy of identifying the "target audience" is constantly improving on social media, so it is likely that the gap between imagined and realized public(s) is not too large (Lo, Chiong, and Cornforth 2015). Nonetheless, the gap between the imagined vs. realized public is difficult to gauge precisely, but the closer these two subsets of publics are, the more finely the military can target and develop its strategic communication.

## Social Media

Social media are designed so that, unlike traditional media, users can both receive and deliver information. The government and the military have always had opportunity to communicate with each other and communicate *at* the public. Social media allow the government and the military to communicate *with* the public in a direct and immediate way. Social media helped the development of imagined communities around various issues of interest. Those interested in security governance and/or the military and its history formed online communities as well. The government's and the military's social media presence, however, provides another space for those interested in national security to learn more about and potentially interact with the government and/or the military. Because of the interactive nature of social media, the public can engage with and respond to the military's strategic information sharing.

Communication via social media allows governments to establish their legitimacy in the public eye on an ongoing, everyday basis. As Heemsbergen and Lindgren (2014, 570–571) note, “Social media support new modes of impressing authority and legitimacy, and afford agency and power for states in times of war. ... Social media further dissolve borders between the uses of propaganda and public information to forward political-strategic goals; are being targeted towards receptive publics rather than antagonists; and, while using familiar rhetorical strategies, become complexly enmeshed in the social communication structures they hope to form.” The same applies to the military. The military, like other public institutions, utilizes social media to communicate the government's strategic narratives to the public. By following civil-military relations norms, the military establishes its own legitimacy as an important security actor that willingly bows to the public will as interpreted by the government.

Social media also provide a different kind of battlefield with state militaries competing with violent non-state actors for information dominance: “Information conflict is changing and spontaneously reorganizing due to the disruptive influence of another complex system: social media” (Niekirk and Maharaj 2013, 1176). While information warfare may be understood as a military concept, the scope of information warfare is broadening and leaking into the civilian realm as we move towards information conflict, where information warfare tactics like cyberwarfare and psychological operations will encompass civilian and military targets. There is also “reputation warfare” to consider in light of social media smear campaigns (ibid., 1169). Because of how easily and quickly information spreads on social media, anyone can disseminate malicious information about an organization or an individual, including military organizations. Such information can often be transmitted far and wide before the military becomes aware of the smear campaign and begins to respond. Preemptive credibility and legitimacy building through strategic communication would, thus, be useful for the military.

Due to the primacy of information in the current era, not only are social media and other online technologies changing information conflict, they are also changing conflict overall. Even as they are only one moving part among many that affects conflict, social media’s limited impact must be considered as conflict evolves. Social media represent both opportunities and challenges for organizations like the military. For instance, on the one hand, social media are a cheap public relations tool because the military has to focus only on the content while the company that owns the social media platform maintains it. On the other hand, however, social media are open to anyone with an email account, which makes social media less secure because they allow multiple accounts to exist and proliferate, including social media accounts set up by terrorist organizations that might challenge or smear states and militaries (Niekirk and Maharaj

2013). As the threats of climate change, war, and social and political upheaval alter social organization, social media will play a role in promoting or hindering these threats and will be changed in the process.

As important as social media have become to the maintenance of government legitimacy through transparency and accountability, these media are not well utilized by most governments. Because governments, and other public institutions, are concerned with maintaining their organizational authority and legitimacy, they often err on the side of caution with respect to the content they post and the tone they use on social media (Baxter, Marcella, and O'Shea 2016; Jukic and Merlak 2017; Meijer and Torenvlied 2016; Rasmussen 2017; Schneider 2016; Wang 2016). Instead of posting extemporaneously, governments often meticulously plan each post weeks, if not months, in advance (see, for instance, Beeby 2014, 2018). Bureaucratic red tape can, therefore, create a highly curated image of the government and public organizations online, an image that allows them to project a single cohesive face to their public but at the cost of spontaneity, one of the hallmarks of social media (Rasmussen 2017).

## **Dissertation Plan**

This dissertation has seven chapters including this introduction. This chapter provides an overview of the actors involved in considerations of information strategy. In the literature review chapter, I take a closer look at all the parts that constitute the problem by exploring the existing literature on information strategy, strategic narratives, and strategic communication, and how strategic narratives and strategic communication are similar and different. I also look at how civil-military relations and the public are part of strategic narratives and strategic



communication. I then focus on social media as a space of military strategic communication. The aim of the chapter is to provide an overview of what is known about the question I am asking in order that I can then proceed to investigate the problem from where others have left off or left an unaddressed gap.

In the case study chapter, I discuss the Canadian Armed Forces as the military case and Twitter as the social media case that I will be analyzing. In the Methods chapter, I describe the process that I followed to gather and analyze the Canadian Armed Forces tweets. There is a detailed description of the method used — Grounded Theory Method (GTM) — and the rationale for using this method. I describe the data collected, the sources, the timelines, and the number of tweets collected per account. This information is followed by the research process of applying GTM to the collected data through coding the collected tweets, developing categories, and writing memoranda. I acknowledge my known biases in order to make the coding and analysis that emerge from my work more transparent. The Data chapter provides description of the data along with examples of the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data analysis. A brief overview of the analysis is followed by the four main themes that emerged from the process: organization, history, preparedness, and partnership.

The Analysis chapter pulls together the themes that emerged through GTM in the Data chapter and the theories of strategic narratives and strategic communication discussed in the Literature Review chapter. The main argument here is that strategic communication is an operationalization of strategic narratives. In the Analysis chapter, this argument is illustrated by drawing parallels between the Harper government's turn to a *Canada as a warrior state* narrative and CAF's tweets that were derived from and reinforced that narrative. The Conclusion chapter reviews my research, findings, and analysis. Strategic narratives and

strategic communication are intertwined, particularly for an organization like the military that can use social media capabilities within the parameters of civil-military relations theory norms. The chapter ends with a list of limitations and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

There are two main theoretical literatures explored in this chapter to illustrate military and government thinking on social media: the literature on strategic narratives and strategic communication, and the literature on civil-military relations. Strategic narratives and strategic communication are theoretical concepts in international relations and military studies,<sup>5</sup> respectively; however, these notions capture two different levels of thinking about the same information. Strategic communication derives from strategic narratives, and strategic narratives are operationalized by strategic communication. Both are aimed at (imagined) public(s). The theory of civil-military relations captures how the civilian government's strategic narrative dictates the military's strategic communication with its imagined public.

Social media provide opportunities for the military to engage with the public more easily. Before social media, the public usually encountered the military during military or national events such as Remembrance Day or Canada Day. The Canadian Forces bases are normally — and deliberately — situated far from densely populated cities, so few members of the public would ever interact in-person with the military. With social media, however, anyone with a computer and an Internet connection can follow the military's social media accounts and even send, post, and tweet messages to these accounts. Not only do social media take the public-military relationship from limited, often one-way communication to potentially unlimited two-way communication, they also cut through the restraints of time and distance and create the possibility for a public-military dialogue at any time and any place. They also create some expectation among the public of ongoing online engagement and communication with the military.

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<sup>5</sup> Strategic communication is now a concept in organizational studies, but it originated in military studies.

The military's social media presence is not value-free. Communicating with the public could have political, economic, and social outcomes, whether intended or otherwise, for the military, for national security policy, and for the government and the state. Thus, public engagement through social media is of potential strategic value to the military and the state. Further reasons to study military social media use include understanding why the military itself is interested in social media, how it uses social media and to what end(s), how the military navigates the ephemeral nature of social media with its own bureaucratic tendencies and the bureaucracy foisted on it by the state, and how the military interacts with the public. For this dissertation, I will focus on the strategic value of the military's social media presence to the military and the government.

### ***Information Strategy***

Information strategy as an aspect of war is both new and old. Manipulating information to gain advantage over an opponent is as old as war. As Clausewitz (1832, as cited in Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret 1989) noted, war is politics by other means, so the manipulation of information that accompanies politics is a natural part of war. On the other hand, information strategy is made new through the invention of new technologies and means of communicating. Where once governing actors and militaries used smoke signals or the telegraph, now they are embedded in cyberspace and social media. New or old, information is a valuable resource, which must be managed at least as well as if not better than other military and political resources.

Information is defined simply as facts about something or someone (Stevenson 2011a). What we do with those facts — and why we do it — is strategy. Strategy is derived from the

Greek word *stratēgein* which means ‘be a general’ — from the words *stratos* ‘army’ + *agein* ‘to lead’ (Stevenson 2011b). Strategy was originally about how the generals planned for battles and war, but over time, strategy has come to mean “a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim” (ibid.). Information strategy then is the planning of information acquisition and sharing to achieve a long-term goal. While strategy, including information strategy, has spread into fields other than military, the military’s thinking on information strategy has perhaps the farthest-reaching consequences with respect to national and international security.

Information and the effect(s) it can have depend on time, circumstances, and the actors who share and receive that information (Borer 2007). Information is also relational because its impact relies on the relations between the aforementioned factors and actors. For instance, information sent at the wrong time to the right recipient or sent at the right time to the right person but under the wrong circumstances can have a deleterious effect. Further, information is also “intrinsically difficult to measure, categorize, and understand, and it is very hard to use effectively in a predictive or linear fashion” (ibid., 236). Because of its sensitivity to a wide variety of factors, planning and managing information is difficult, if not impossible.

Strategy is “the bridge that relates military power to political purpose; it is neither military power *per se* nor political purpose. ... [it is] *the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy*” [original emphasis] (Gray 1999, 17). Applying this to the realm of information, information strategy becomes the use that is made of facts and knowledge for the ends of policy to achieve a particular aim of the military in service of the state government. Because information strategy may have implications for the continued existence of the state as an entity in the international system, it is an important aspect of national security.

Information strategy for the military initially had to do with ensuring that information about operations, battle plans, logistics, etc. could be conveyed back and forth from the frontlines and top to bottom from generals to soldiers and vice versa. Military information strategy as a mechanism of influencing publics emerged primarily during World War I as a subset of political propaganda (Arquilla 2007). It has since taken other names such as perception management, public diplomacy, influence operations, strategic communication, etc. to avoid the stigma of manipulation associated with propaganda. Despite the renaming, the purpose of strategic use of information is still to “influence mass publics by weakening the enemy’s will, shoring up one’s own, and persuading bystanders of the righteousness of one’s cause” (ibid., 5). Information strategy then is the use of information to win the war through rhetorical influence.

There is an extensive literature on military information strategy covering issues from military public diplomacy and public relations to influence and even psychological operations, but for this dissertation I will focus on strategic communication. Strategic communication is the organization-centric approach to information sharing in which other fields, particularly organizational communication, have taken extensive interest. I will briefly note how strategic communication is understood in some of these other fields, but the focus in this dissertation remains on military approaches to strategic communication. The military’s use of social media is one part of the strategic communication in which it engages.

I will also look at strategic narratives for two reasons. First, in some strategic communication literature, the term “strategic narratives” is used synonymously or as a subset of strategic communication. Second, strategic narratives have their own International Relations literature, which ties them to states’ interactions with the international system, including on

matters of security policy. Strategic narratives come across as both subset and overarching aspects of strategic communication. I tackle the similarities and differences between the two concepts and argue why strategic communication might be considered a subset of strategic narratives, even if they are mutually constructing.

### **Strategic Communication**

Strategic communication is the organization sharing information with a variety of imagined publics. Paul (2011, 3) defines strategic communication as “coordinated action, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives.” The focus on the *organization* as the information-sharing unit instead of state institutions or a political party is important here because the organization shares information primarily from its own perspective. The state’s intent finds its way into public organizations’ strategic communication because they exist under the umbrella of the state; however, strategic communication carries the *flavour* of the organization that engages in it. Strategic communication is the organization’s interpretation of the state’s intent.

From an organizational communication perspective, strategic communication is the organization “communicating purposefully to advance its mission,” and includes marketing communication including advertising, public relations, technical communication, political communication, etc. (Hallahan et al. 2007, 4). The point of emphasis is *purposeful* communication to promote the organization and achieve its goals. As per this definition, any communication that is planned to fulfill a specific or an overarching goal for the organization can then be included under strategic communication. Applying this to the military, all planned

communication is strategic, whether it is an advertising campaign to boost recruitment or an event to commemorate an important battle.

While strategic communication is not the same as propaganda or psychological operations, there are areas of similarity, particularly the element of persuasion. Insisting on the distinction between informing and influencing, however, is naive because “there is no such thing as value-free information” (Paul 2011, 14). There are military information operations that are focused on changing people’s minds, but even a simple sharing of information is not without purpose. If we agree with the logic of no value-free information, then all information is intended to influence, no matter how subtly. Because strategic communication influences, or at least attempts to influence, the organization’s imagined public(s), the organization also changes itself in the process of strategizing its communication in order to better “fit” its public’s expectations. With social media, the public’s responses further influence the organization by showing what parts of the organization’s strategic communication worked and what failed.

Strategic communication is asymmetrical insofar as the organization plans to influence its public, but the public may not be aware of this attempted persuasion (Hallahan et al. 2007). While this might appear to skew the potential results heavily in the military’s favour, the asymmetry goes both ways for several reasons. First, the military is targeting an imagined public that may not be exactly what the military expects. Second, the military is not going to be sure of how its imagined public will react to a particular message or series of messages. Third, there is also likely to be a gap between the military’s imagined and realized publics, that is, who the military imagines its publics to be and who its publics are could be two very different groups. Fourth, the full impact of the military’s strategic communication on its imagined and realized publics is impossible to determine. Finally, the impact of the public’s interaction on the



military is also difficult to compute. So, while we know that the military's strategic communication affects the publics and that the publics' responses affect the military, the impact mechanisms and degree of impact are currently impossible to measure accurately.

Another challenge for any organization engaging in strategic communication is that there are limits on strategizing. As Moltke (1871, as cited in Moltke, Hughes, and Bell 1995, *On Strategy*) notes, "No plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength. Only the layman [sic] sees in the course of a campaign a consistent execution of a preconceived and highly detailed original concept pursued consistently to the end." While the communication strategy of the military is not really encountering an enemy, it is still going to encounter a myriad of unpredictable factors such as unexpected public responses and bad timing. The military can strategize and plan its communication and the challenges it might encounter up to a certain degree; beyond that, it has to be prepared to tackle any unexpected fallout whether it is for the organization or for the government.

### **Strategic Narratives**

Strategic narratives emerge from a variety of political actors, usually the state government or the international system. According to Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle (2014, 2), "Strategic narratives are a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors ... a tool for political actors to extend their influence, manage expectations, and change the discursive environment in which they operate. They are narratives about both states and the system itself, both about who we are and what kind of order we want. The point of strategic narratives is to *influence the behavior of others*" [emphasis added] (see also

Levinger and Roselle 2017; Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle 2015; Roselle, Miskimmon, and O'Loughlin 2014). Strategic narratives are purposeful stories about the state and the international system that project a particular image or idea in order to persuade the public of the state's, and occasionally the system's, legitimacy and intent.

Strategic narratives define what the state thinks is its role in the world and what the world might think of the state's role in the world system. In the preface to the document *A National Strategic Narrative*, Anne-Marie Slaughter describes the strategic narrative as “a story with a beginning, middle, and projected happy ending that will transcend our political divisions, orient us as a nation, and give us both a common direction and the confidence and commitment to get to our destination” (as cited in Mr. Y, Porter, and Mykleby 2011, 2). It is the vision and mission statement of the state with respect to what it represents and what it wants to achieve in the international system.

Strategic narratives can be understood as derivatives of the ideas of soft power and the practice of public diplomacy. Soft power is a concept whereby a state's reputation can persuade people and other states to follow its lead, while public diplomacy is communicating to foreign publics to convince them of the state's legitimacy and good intentions (Nye 2012). The stories that political actors tell to establish and extend the reach of soft power and to persuade foreign publics are strategic narratives. According to Freedman (2015, 19), a strategic narrative is a deliberate framing device that relates to “the experience, culture, and concerns of its intended audience.” The identity of the public and the identity of the state are bound together in the formulation of strategic narratives.

The public for these narratives is often largely made up of the citizens who want to know about the direction in which the state is headed. In the case of more powerful states, the

public(s) might include other states and the citizens of other states who are interested in how the behaviour of the more powerful state affects them. The audiences of the strategic narratives, however, are not just the foreign publics and/or other states in the system, but also the domestic public(s) and institutions. What is said about the state in the international system and to other publics often makes its way back home to the domestic public(s) as well. In a networked world and with the ease and speed of sharing information via social media, it is almost guaranteed that the target audience of the strategic narrative is not the only group of people that hears that narrative. These narratives must be planned with the entire world as potential audience.

The domestic public(s) should ideally have access to, and understand, the strategic narrative(s) because its support of or disagreement with the government's actions and intentions in the international system matters. Slaughter, writing about the need for a US strategic narrative, notes, "A national strategic narrative must be a story that *all Americans can understand and identify with in their own lives*" [emphasis added] (as cited in Mr. Y, Porter, and Mykleby 2011, 4). The strategic narrative, then, is about the state, but it is also about the people that form the state — the individual citizens and the collective public.

In a democracy where the public is (ideally) the primary actor within the state to which the government and other public institutions respond, the strategic narrative is the elite political actors' summation of the work they are doing in the name of the state. Strategic narratives are the stories that heads of states and/or governments tell the public about where the country was, where it is, and where it is heading. For instance, the Harper government created a strategic narrative of Canadian sovereignty by emphasizing Canadian contributions to the World Wars in the past, the limits of Canadian territory and security in the Arctic in the present, and the potential for Canada to be a member of the UN Security Council again in the near future. In this

way, the strategic narratives frame the state and its presence in the international system in a particular manner.

Over time, strategic narratives also shape the public(s)'s interests, identity, and “understanding of how international relations works and where it [the state] is heading” (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 2014, 2). Because the public is influenced over time to identify and understand the state within a particular framing of the state and the international system, changing strategic narratives is not easy and requires a concerted effort across various institutional, governmental, and other public, private, and social channels. For instance, many Canadians identify with peacekeeping as Canada’s and the Canadian Armed Forces’ role in the international system, so changing this perception of Canadians would require a sustained effort over time (Ankersen 2014; Dorn 2005). With time and concerted effort, strategic narratives can be shifted, but it is an arduous process.

### **Similarities between Strategic Narratives and Strategic Communication**

Both strategic narratives and strategic communication are *strategic*, that is, they refer to purposeful efforts towards persuading and/or influencing imagined public(s) that might be domestic or foreign or both. Strategic narratives and strategic communication attempt interaction and engagement with the imagined public. Even though the target imagined public might be different for strategic narratives and strategic communication, the fact remains that they both have imagined publics. There is going to be overlap amongst the state’s and the military’s publics, partially because the military is a subset of the state. The other common element, of course, will be the gap those using these information-sharing mechanisms will experience between their imagined and realized public. Who strategic narratives and strategic

communication try to influence and who is actually influenced can make up two very different groups.

Strategic narratives and strategic communication are performances of identity through language, images, sounds, other texts, and other means of communication. Their scope, intent, and audiences might vary, but both strategic narratives and strategic communication present a version of their national and organizational “selves,” respectively, in order to convince their publics of their credibility and legitimacy as actors with respect to the issue at hand. People, whether or not they are aware of it, are constantly performing an identity by altering their actions according to the environment (Papacharissi 2015, 96). Extrapolating from individual identity performance and applying it to organizations and states shows that organizations and states also perform identities and alter their actions as per the environment. When they are guided by an end goal and may wish to present an identity that gets them closer to that goal, states and organizations may alter their strategic narratives and strategic communication to perform different or new identities.

Strategic narratives and strategic communication are part of the public or the social sphere. The public sphere is the space where citizens, and other concerned actors, can interact freely and have the freedom to express and publish their opinions (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox 1974, 49). The social sphere exists between private and public in a semi-public<sup>6</sup> space, particularly through online technologies such as social media (Papacharissi 2015). It is in the public or semi-public social spheres that organizations and states perform their identities through planned information sharing to achieve some goal by persuading their imagined and realized publics. Social media are increasingly one of the more popular spaces where both

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<sup>6</sup> Social media are semi-public because messages shared on these platforms can be seen by a wide variety of people depending on the privacy settings of the user and/or the nature of the platform itself. For instance, users can choose to make their posts available to the public or only to friends on Facebook, but tweets are public on Twitter.

strategic narratives and strategic communication co-exist because these media provide a social or public sphere — depending on the platform — for engaging with their imagined publics. In other words, both strategic narratives and strategic communication share some of the spaces within which they are enacted.

Both strategic narrative(s) and strategic communication have political implications, but the scope of these implications can vary greatly from personal to international depending on the organization involved in strategic communication and the state involved in the strategic narrative sharing. For instance, the military sharing images of the Pride flag flying on a base might have personal political implications for those who identify as LGTBQ+, and it might have international implications when allies of the Canadian state see that the Canadian military supports LGTBQ+ personnel. CAF sharing images of its participation in NATO operations against Russian aggression in Central and Eastern Europe sends a broader political message about the international system and Canada's place in it. In the latter example, the strategic communication ties neatly with the strategic narrative of the state.

### **Differences between Strategic Narratives and Strategic Communication**

Strategic narratives are about the way the state is identified along with its people. Strategic communication is how an organization identifies itself and its people. Because the state is larger in size, exists within the international system that can (sometimes) hold it accountable, and is responsible to a public that performs the state identity, strategic narratives are difficult to change. Organizations, because of their smaller size and because they may have fewer accountability mechanisms, may be able to change their strategic communication to perform a new interpretation of their identity relatively more easily than the state. With respect

to public organizations, when political parties change, they may change some of the organizations' strategic communication, but changing the state's strategic narrative will often be a longer, slower process.

With respect to time, strategic narratives are effective over the *longue durée*, while strategic communication can be comparatively shorter-term. The idea of Canada as a state, its identity and culture as an entity in the world, have formed over time. The notion that Canada is a peacekeeping state emerged after Canada contributed troops to the United Nations Emergency Force during the 1956 Suez Crisis, and it still persists. The sustained efforts of the Harper government to change this narrative showed limited results over the past decade. Comparatively, the organization's strategic communication can be *relatively* easily altered because of its smaller size and generally fewer moving parts. With some caveats, most private organizations also do not face as much scrutiny or path dependency issues as do public organizations. Organizations can, therefore, try a particular direction with their strategic communication, which they can change if it does not work. States cannot change their international image quickly because it has developed over time and will need to be reshaped over time.

Strategic communication is organization-centric, while strategic narratives are state-centric. Strategic communication focuses on the organizational goals, while strategic narratives are about the state's aims within the international system. Where we see this difference reduced is in the case of public organizations, such as the military, that are not only concerned with the "bottom line" of their own department, but also with supporting the national objectives. The strategic communication/strategic narrative divide can become even more difficult to define when we discuss organizations like the military that are not only public entities but are also

engaged in enacting the state's foreign policy. Strategic communication and strategic narrative become entwined quite closely in the military's case, so there is academic literature where the terms are used interchangeably: strategic communication takes the form of narratives or communication is what strategic narratives do. Parsing the difference between strategic communication and strategic narratives can become quite difficult.

### **Public Organizations, Strategic Narratives, and Strategic Communication**

Strategic communication in public organizations and institutions is essentially the operationalization of the state's strategic narratives, and this is particularly true of the military. Because the military is a domestic public institution that frequently operates within the international system, the military's strategic communication comes extremely close to paralleling or even reproducing the strategic narrative through its work. Military strategic communication is meant to support national objectives; support operational objectives; get the most out of specific events/policies; and promote long-term positive trends such as credibility, shared values, and improving the state's image (Paul 2011, 48–53). Supporting national objectives and improving the state's image help sustain the state's strategic narrative directly. Supporting operational objectives, ensuring the best use of policies and events, and promoting credibility and shared values is an indirect way of furthering the state's narrative.

Moreover, the public now increasingly demands accountability and some level of transparency from the military, even if the institution is held in high regard (Burk 1994, 22). This demand is simply a matter of growing accessibility to information as well as a decline in the North American public's trust in the government's capabilities and its legitimacy (Abelson 2004; Dalton 2017; Green 2017; Ladd 2012; Pew Research Center 2014). The Environics



Institute and Institute on Governance (2016) found the Canadian public appeared to regain some trust in government after the 2015 federal elections, but a more recent poll has again shown a decline in public trust (Tremonti 2017). Public mistrust or distrust in the state can spread to state-based institutions like the military. A pre-emptive approach for the military would be to provide some evidence to support its expert/professional authority as well as its credibility and legitimacy as a security actor.

The military and the state both need to maintain their legitimacy as the appropriate actors on security in the eyes of the public. According to Habermas (1988, 74–75), a legitimation crisis is based on “a discrepancy between the need for motives declared by the state, the educational system and the occupational system on the one hand, and the motivation supplied by the socio-cultural system on the other.” The differences between needs of society, state, and organization can lead to legitimation crises. The establishment of legitimacy prior to the emergence of crises is one way to avoid the problem (Bentele and Nothhaft 2010). Establishing a communication channel via social media is one way, among many others, for the military to maintain its legitimacy by being proactively accountable to the public.

Strategic communication is about the military getting the people on its side for existing or upcoming missions that are inspired by the strategic narrative of the state. As Meyer (as cited in Halloran 2007, 6) notes, “Armies don’t fight wars, nations<sup>7</sup> fight wars.” The state government’s task is to build consensus on national defence and security issues utilizing the

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<sup>7</sup> Meyer possibly meant to say “states fight wars” here. State and nation refer to different entities in political science and international relations. Connor (1978, 379) differentiates the two this way: “The state is the major political subdivision of the globe. As such, it is readily defined and ... is easily conceptualized in quantitative terms. ... [T]he essence of a nation is intangible ... a psychological bond that joins a people and differentiates it, in the subconscious conviction of its members, from all other people in a most vital way.” Canada, for instance, is a state because it possesses the means of violence and coercion, a geographically bounded territory, and the monopoly on rule-making within its borders (Krieger 2005). Mohawk, Cree, and Oneida are names of Aboriginal First Nations within Canada, the members of which possess their own sociocultural and psychological bonds that make them a nation.

strategic narrative. For instance, public opinion firm Strategic Counsel advised the Harper government not to base their arguments for the Afghan mission on values because “while the value of human rights is strongly supported, there is a risk of appearing to be imposing Canadian values” (as cited in Woods 2007). The military’s task is to support the government’s overarching strategic narrative through its organizational strategic communication. One of the ways in which the Canadian military’s work in Afghanistan was framed was that CAF was helping provide security and stability so that human rights could be restored, democracy could prosper, and children — including girls, if not especially girls — could get an education. In this way, the state’s strategic narrative and the military’s strategic communication fortify each other.

### ***Civil-Military Relations***

Civil-military relations (CMR) is the term employed to denote the relationship between the government and the military. The government is made up of the elected representatives of the people, and it is responsible for the wellbeing of the state and the public. The military is a part of the state institutions for which the elected government is responsible. The military, like other parts of the civil service, serves the public at the government’s command. What is different about the military’s work as a public institution is that much of it is related to defending the state from existential threats. If the military should fail in its primary task, the state could cease to exist. The government preserves the state’s identity in the international system, usually ideologically, but it can command the military to defend the state in the physical sense should the need arise.

In his canonical work, *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington (1957) argued that the military is a professional organization the main purpose of which is to manage violence.

Beyond the management of violence, the military can assist with other tasks, as ordered by the state, but it should never be involved in the political decision-making process. The democratically elected government is in charge of decisions because it represents the people's will, and as such the government's decisions with respect to military actions must be final. The government must extend complete civil control over a politically abstinent military in order to prevent coups as well as other misuses of the immense kinetic power in the hands of the military.

Huntington (1957) argued for a professional military that took a purely advisory stance in its interactions with the civilian government. He argued that like any other profession, the military should provide guidance and advice only on the technical aspects of security and otherwise follow the civilian government's lawful orders, even if those orders run counter to the military personnel's technical advice or ideas. Maintaining the government's will over the military is the reason why the military has to be careful in its communication with the public, lest it go off-message and create public opposition to the government's plans. If the military posts something on its publicly accessible social media accounts that runs counter to the government's stance, it could put its organizational legitimacy at risk, while also raising questions about the government's legitimacy and its control over the military. What the military says and does is, therefore, bound by the idea of civil control, and if the military does not follow these strictures it opens itself up to chastisement.

### **Civil-Military Relations in Canada**

Unlike Huntington, Bland (1995; 1999) recognizes the military officer as a political actor, who has a vested interest in the policymaking process as he/she is responsible for the

lives of the personnel who are affected by defence policies. There is a need for sharing of responsibilities and decision-making between the state and the military instead of control of one over the other (Bland 1999; 2000; 2001). Creating the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) position was a step in the right direction for the Canadian Armed Forces; however, Bland (1995) argues, there is room for more advisory contributions from the CDS and a more open attitude towards such advice at the government level.

It is also worth noting that the civil-military problematique in the US differs from the Canadian problem from a capability perspective. In the US the problem is ensuring civil control so that the immensely powerful military does what it is told (Feaver 1996). In Canada, the problem is ensuring that the military has the capability to do what the government expects of it and whether the government is aware of what resources the military will need to be able to do as ordered (Noonan 2008). The capability-commitment gap is something that the government needs to consider when shaping the strategic narrative. The military cannot really make this gap a part of its strategic communication to the public lest it be punished, which is why the government must be alert to the military's advice in shaping the strategic narrative.

### **Civil-Military Relations, Strategic Narratives, and Strategic Communication**

The military, unlike private and some other public organizations, also experiences restrictions on what it can say in a public space. Civil-military relations (CMR) and the norms imposed on the military and its communication are discussed at length below; however, it is worth pointing out civil-military relations norms here because they add another layer of asymmetry for the military organization. With respect to influencing its imagined public(s), the military is short some resources. This lack is particularly obvious when we look at what violent

non-state actors can get away with posting online. For instance, Halloran (2007, 4) cites an unnamed US officer returning from Iraq: “We plan kinetic campaigns and maybe consider adding public affairs annex. Our adversaries plan information campaigns that exploit kinetic events, especially spectacular attacks and martyrdom operations. We aren’t even on the playing field, but al Qaeda seeks to dominate it because they know their war will be won by ideas.” Violent non-state actors can talk freely about the frequently contentious politics at the root of their mission(s); the military cannot. The military, thus, encounters asymmetry not only in relation to its imagined public and partner or friendly organizations, but also the adversarial and enemy organizations it is facing.

The state’s strategic narratives shape the military’s strategic communication, while the strictures of CMR further constrain what the military can and cannot say. The military communicates the government’s intent by following legal orders,<sup>8</sup> but it is also expected do so by furthering the government narrative in its communication. What the reigning understanding of civil control means in terms of strategic information sharing is that the military’s strategic communication must never counter or appear to counter the government’s strategic narrative(s). The norm that appears to have emerged around the civil control over the military is that the military not only follows legal orders, but it is also expected to make efforts to support what the government is doing. The military, in other words, increasingly appears to — and appears to be expected to — sing from the same song sheet as the government.

Not agreeing with the government’s stance, especially in public, can have negative consequences for military personnel. For instance, when the US Army Chief, General Eric K. Shinseki argued that the administration was grossly underestimating the number of troops that

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<sup>8</sup> Governments can give orders to the military that while legal/lawful in the state would be unlawful under international law. The military would have the right to refuse those orders lest it be held accountable for war crimes in the International Criminal Court or other tribunals. See the Nuremberg Principles for more on this.

would be needed in Iraq, the Bush administration reprimanded him (Shanker 2007). Kori Schake, the director for defense strategy on the National Security Council staff from 2002 to 2005, noted, “It sent a very clear signal to the military leadership about how that kind of military judgment was going to be valued. So it served to silence critics just at the point in time when, internal to the process, you most wanted critical judgment” (as cited in Shanker 2007, para 10). While such circumstances might be rare, they point to the problems that might arise for the military when it is trying to do its job.

On the other hands, following the strictures of CMR on what and how the military can communicate also contributes to the organization maintaining its legitimacy in the public eye. Strategic communication is essentially about “gaining and maintaining credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the relevant publics, so that a long-term relationship/partnership can be nurtured” (Paul 2011, 9). Despite the asymmetries the military experiences, strategic communication is one of the most important tasks that the military faces as an organization accountable to and representing the state and its public. Abiding by the CMR norms ensures that the military can retain its legitimacy even when communicating strategically.

### ***The Public and Information Strategy***

While civil-military relations are focused on civilian control over the military, they are primarily about *the public* because the democratically elected civilian government exerts the will of the public over the military. The government serves at the public’s pleasure, so not following the government’s legal orders would be equivalent to ignoring the will of the very public — and state — that the military is sworn to defend. The military following government orders is, therefore, the military following what the public wants for the democratic state. The

demands of civil-military relations are placed upon the military to ensure that the military does what the government thinks the public wants. CMR theory holds that the government has the right to be wrong, but the military must do as the government asks in order to preserve democracy and the primacy of public will.

The public decides whether the government, and by extension, the military have the credibility and legitimacy to represent the interests of the state. Information sharing is a way for the government and the military to establish, maintain, and/or bolster their credibility and legitimacy in the public's eyes. The domestic public's support is essential for the success of the state's strategic narrative. Governments' attempts to shift strategic narratives also rely on public support. The military's strategic communication promotes strategic narratives while also promoting its own organizational interests because public support is central to consideration for defence in the budget and the willingness of citizens to serve in the military.

### **The Public**

Despite being an integral component of the state, the public is often missing or sidelined in civil-military relations theory. The primary reason for this is that the public is an ill-defined concept. Defining the public is a difficult task because it means many different things to many people. The use of public as a prefix in a variety of terms and fields of study such as public relations, public administration, public policy, etc. has further muddied the waters. Public, however, is a concept worth understanding because of the meanings it imbues with respect to accountability and legitimacy in public organizations and public institutions.

The word public is used as a noun when referring to a general community of people as a whole (Oxford English Dictionary 2017). Public is also used as an adjective to refer to either the

people as a whole or to refer to something in open view (ibid.). As Kaplan (1964, 48) notes, “The meaning of a term is a family affair among its various senses.” Therefore, all these meanings of the word public will come into play in the current dissertation. The term will also, however, need to be stretched beyond social, geographical, and political boundaries due to the nature of political life in a hyperconnected world. Thus, public is a global concept because social media allow the political management of domestic and foreign affairs of state to come into open view of both domestic and foreign publics.

Public has often been defined in opposition to private, but generally with the idea that public is that which is shared with others. In Roman political life, “the Latin *publicus* referred to ... what was shared and open to view” [original emphasis] (Hannay 2005, 11). One of the shared interests that emerged for individuals was the Westphalian state, which protected the territory as well as the people and their rights as contained within that territory. The state, thus, could be considered the political context within which the public was defined. The state was also eventually “owned” by the public in democracies where the public elected who represented its interests. The public, thus, is quasi-tangible as the body to which “political ... life is responsible” (ibid., 21). There is a two-way flow of rights and representation between the state and the public. The state owes its existence to the public, and the public is protected by the state from existential threats.

The members of the public could be identified as those who had the “freedom to influence public debate” (Hannay 2005, 19). Until recently, this ability was usually limited to the citizens of the state. In today’s networked world, however, with the influences of globalization, the presence of diasporas from various parts of the world in most countries, the ongoing intensification of international trade as well as the advent of communication



technologies that make it much easier and faster to get information around many parts of the world, the citizenship standard for influencing public debate has shifted. Now, the public is vaster. What is said to a citizen is also being heard by a non-citizen, and the latter may have the capability to stir up action against what is being said to the citizen. The public can, thus, develop around *issues* instead of citizenship.

The public often only makes its presence felt around particular issues and otherwise remains amorphous. As Warner (2002, 50) notes, “A public is self-organized. ... It exists *by virtue of being addressed*” [original emphasis]. The question then arises, which came first: the public or the address? If the address comes first, then who is the address for? If the public comes first, what is the reason for it coming together? Warner (2002, 51) notes, “The circularity is essential to the phenomenon. A public might be real and efficacious, but its reality lies in just this reflexivity by which an addressable object is conjured into being in order to enable the very discourse that gives it existence.” The address and its public are, thus, mutually constructing.

The reflexivity of the public and those crafting the issue-related texts can help shape the relevant public for the issue. The amorphous mass of people and a widely targeted text may lead to a reflexive self-classification of the public into those to whom the text appeals and those it does not, and eventually through several iterations, distinct publics for distinct texts and discourses may emerge. Warner (2002, 61) believes that a public self-organizing around particular discourses can only occur if the members of the public are paying attention to the discourse: “Because a public exists only by virtue of address, it must predicate some degree of attention, however notional, from its members.” If the public is to come together around an issue, it must be aware, however minimally, that an issue exists.

## **The Imagined Public**

Speaking of public opposition to the Afghan mission, Boucher and Nossal (2017, 154) note, “We should talk about multiple mass ‘publics’ instead of aggregating a fictional singular ‘Canadian public.’” Similarly, on social media, there exist multiple publics — Canadian and otherwise — that are interested in the CAF Twitter accounts for myriad reasons. If there exist multiple domestic publics on one issue, then it is easy to see how multiple publics might exist online and how difficult it might be to define them in a coherent manner.

The public can be quite a broad concept, but in order to craft a text or plan its information strategy, the military has to imagine its target audience — its *imagined* public. I borrow the idea of imagined from Anderson’s idea of the nation as imagined community, where the nation is understood as “*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” [original emphasis] (Anderson 1991, 6). Similarly, the military will never know most of the members of the public, meet or hear of them, but in the minds of the information strategy planners there lives an image of the public. This understanding of the public is the imagined public to which the military directs its strategic communication.

It is impossible to guess the exact configuration of the military’s imagined public because it is likely that the military itself does not have an exact image in mind. Most probably, the military’s imagined public is constituted of the citizens of Canada — those who can hold some sway in public debates with their votes (Hannay 2005), and who can be recruited to serve in the military. The other major components of the Canadian military’s imagined public would be the national government and allies. The military is directly accountable to the government, so

its strategic communication to the public must follow the CMR strictures of civilian supremacy because the government might track military strategic communication to see whether it supports the government's strategic narratives around security. Finally, the military would need to think of how its communication at home might be viewed by military allies. As an actor that often works outside the state's territory and alongside allied militaries, those militaries might come across the Canadian military's communication on social media.

The military is likely to have incidental publics by virtue of their social media posts being liked and shared by a wide range of people with their own diverse networks. These publics are going to be even more difficult to define than the military's imagined public because of the vast spread of the imagined public's social networks. What the wide reach of social media thus means is that the military's *realized* public might be different than its imagined public. Social media might allow the military to target its messages to the demographics of its imagined public, but there might be a lot of people outside those demographics that might also receive that message. The military gathers social media analytics on its realized publics,<sup>9</sup> and then likely attempts to shape its messages more clearly to target their imagined public.

### ***Social Media***

Internet-based technologies and in particular social media have become a part of everyday life for many people. Social media allow "users, and groups of users, to create and exchange content, often in an interactive or collaborative fashion" (Gainous and Wagner 2014, 2). A user-centric approach to information access, use, and manipulation is at the core of social

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<sup>9</sup> Based on information received as part of a 2014 Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) Online Request, CAF collects information on impressions, new followers, retweets, and clicks on hyperlinks embedded in the tweets as well as the top five tweets based on number of impressions. Data are also collected from other social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube.

media. Social media create a space for “two-way communication in which *user-generated* content, data sharing, and community-building have taken centre stage” [emphasis added] (Werbin 2012, 248). The focus on user-generated content and the dialogical aspect of social media separate them from other media like television, radio, magazines, etc. By placing the content in the hands of the users, social media platforms imbue the users with the potential to affect change at a variety of levels from intra and interpersonal to the local and the global.

The emergence of social media has had wide-ranging social, cultural, economic, and political effects. As Monberg (1998, 426) notes, “Changes in media technology often change patterns of social interaction, and changed patterns of social interaction have political consequences.” The invention of the printing press brought literacy to the people, which in turn allowed them to learn what was happening in the world and then organize for change. Social media also bring the world to the people, but at a much faster pace. Further, with social media people can communicate with policymakers. Instead of writing letters to actors of interest, members of the public can just tweet at them. The power to communicate directly with their elected representatives in an instant around an issue or over a longer period of time can help empower the people and encourage them to communicate with their democratic representatives as well as their communities to bring attention to issues of interest.

In the process of sharing their opinions about the information posted online, the members of the public become more than just users; they become part of the production process when they share the information and add their opinion to the discourse surrounding that particular piece of information. They become *producers*, a combination of the words producer and user, who not only consume information, but also construct it (Bruns 2008). This producing makes producers part of the story. Becoming a part of the story means that social media users

are more engaged with the information they encounter than they would be if they were unable to respond to and/or manipulate the information they received. Being able to shape the story is a freedom that no other historical form of media provided to quite the same degree as social media do. Citizens' ability to produce also creates challenges for the government and the military with planning their strategic narratives and strategic communication because it is impossible to gauge how the public will reshape the information shared with it.

What is important about the produsage ability of the public is that it can shape the strategic narrative and even the strategic communication of the military. The imagined reaction of the public in the form of lost votes or in the form of low support in public opinion polls has often guided politicians in their decision-making. Social media add another space for the public to express their thoughts and opinions on government policy, including national defence. The public reaction on social media is often so prompt that traditional/mainstream news organizations often reference tweets in their coverage of breaking and/or top news stories (see, for instance, Jung Moon and Hadley 2014; Jung Moon and Hyun 2013; LaMarre and Suzuki-Lambrecht 2013). Governments announce their decision, often touching upon a strategic narrative in the process, and the public supports or opposes the government's decision and its use of strategic narrative(s). In this way, in the age of social media, the public's reaction to strategic narratives and strategic communication is more observable.

### **Strategic Narratives, Strategic Communication, and Social Media**

Because of their ephemeral nature social media might appear to be better suited to strategic communication than to strategic narratives. Social media, however, might be equally useful when reshaping strategic narratives over the long term. Changing strategic narratives

requires effort over an extended period of time, and strategic narratives can be altered through “everyday” strategic communication via social and other media that can slowly begin to change the strategic narrative in the direction that the government would prefer. Social media also make it easier to adapt the strategic communication according to the changing government strategic narrative because posts can introduce changes in narrative and communication incrementally.

From a military perspective, the main weapon in the social media environment is that of the story.<sup>10</sup> Social media can appear to be ephemeral in nature even though what goes on the Internet is potentially on the Internet forever. This makes the story an interesting “weapon” for the military because every social media post is in some ways an individual story, and yet in other ways it forms part of the larger organizational strategic communication plan and the government’s strategic narratives. The public’s access to the social media story is likely to be intermittent, so most people will have access to only a few “pieces” of the story. It is possible that only those who follow these accounts religiously will regularly get the “complete” social media story. Each post on the organization’s social media timeline must, therefore, be crafted to best achieve the strategic communication goals and strategic narrative ends of the organization and the government, respectively.

Social media stories can be powerful: “Electronic narratives are so pervasive that they generate actions before ideologies are considered. Nearly all the Arab Spring insurrections lack ideological cohesion for governing; what they have in common is powerful narratives for dismantling” (Petit 2012, 26). The lack of ideological orientation would not necessarily inhibit what social media can inspire among followers of particular accounts. The room for ideological incongruity and the limited gap between post and action translates to social media being a

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<sup>10</sup> I will use the word *story* to refer to social media narrative in order to separate it from the strategic narrative and thus, avoid confusion.

volatile weapon that could just as easily backfire as it would hit the intended target. In planning social media communication strategy, this is something that must remain top of mind for military personnel.

While field operations have an important role to play in preserving or promoting state interests, the military needs to adapt to the information-based nature of war at home and abroad because “we do not focus enough effort on winning and maintaining the hearts and minds of the most critical and accessible population: *our own*” [original emphasis] (Betz 2008, 511). While the military does not bear sole responsibility for domestic populations’ perceptions of war and conflict because of the government’s role in shaping the strategic narrative, the military can support the state’s strategic narrative through its own strategic communication with the public. The military not only gains, maintains, and promotes its own organizational interests through strategic communication on social media in order to preserve the military’s credibility and legitimacy, it also promotes the government’s strategic narrative, especially on matters of national and international security.

### **Chapter 3: Case Study — Canadian Armed Forces and Twitter**

The Canadian Armed Forces and Twitter are the military and social media case studies in this dissertation. The Canadian Armed Forces, also called the Canadian Forces, comprise primarily of the land, sea, and air services — the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force.<sup>11</sup> CAF, like any military organization, cannot be understood without knowing its history as well as the civilian government that directs it and the society which it serves and from which it arises. In the first half of the chapter, I provide a brief overview of Canadian military organization and its history to orient the dissertation to the case study. In the second half of the chapter, I discuss Twitter as the social media case. Twitter is a microblogging social media platform where people and organizations can create microblog posts or tweets and share them publicly.

In this dissertation, the case study chapter precedes the methods chapter in order for the readers to be oriented to both the organization and the social media platform I will be discussing. There are references to both the Canadian Armed Forces and Twitter in the methods chapter, so this chapter introduces these entities before discussing how the data related to them were collected and analyzed. An understanding of what is being researched will ideally help readers to better grasp why a particular method of data collection and analysis was chosen.

#### ***Canadian Armed Forces***

With a few minor exceptions, “war has not come to Canada” (Morton 1992, ix). Canadians have gone abroad to fight in wars, but the domestic public, while it suffered under

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<sup>11</sup> The Canadian Special Operations Forces Command are also part of CAF, but they are not present on Twitter, so I have not included them here.



war rations and restrictions, did not encounter bloody military engagements after the War of 1812, with the principal exception of the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, a campaign on the prairie frontier remote from the main centres of population (ibid.). This affords Canadians a certain naiveté when it comes to matters of war and conflict and an indifference towards the country's military. It is perhaps because of this innocence in martial matters that Canadians may at times come across as “‘an unmilitary people,’ a description most Canadians regard as flattering” (ibid.). The Canadian military and the personnel who serve, thus exist in and defend a state and a public that are ambivalent about issues of security. As Granatstein (as cited in Ankersen 2014, 74) notes, “Canadians want their army to be fierce in war, social workers in peace ... caring and efficient in natural disasters, and they want this without cost to them. This is not sensible, but that is the state of affairs.” This has been the state of affairs historically and is likely to remain the case into at least the near future.

The military, despite the public attitude, remains an important part of statecraft for Canada. Canada continues to shape its strategic narratives at home and in the international system by placing the military on combat, peace, disaster relief, crime prevention, and humanitarian missions across the globe, defining what role Canada wants to play in the international system. The Canadian military's communication is worth analysis because of how it supports the Canadian state's strategic narratives in the international system and represents those narratives to Canadians themselves through a variety of tools and media.

### **Canadian Military History**

The history of the Canadian military is often understood to start with confederation in 1867. Wars before then were fought between the British, the French, and the Indigenous

Peoples. Because my dissertation deals with the Canadian military in its “modern” form, I will only be focusing on Canadian military history post-confederation. This is when I would argue that Canada started to emerge from British dominance, gradually developing its own voice in foreign policy, and making its own decisions about participation in wars in which, until 1945, the country’s forces fought as national, but integral, formations of British Empire/Commonwealth forces. For instance, while many Canadians count the War of 1812 as a Canadian victory, it was really a victory of Great Britain against the United States (Morton 1981). What is essential to keep in mind is that Canada’s inability to defend its long, exposed borders by itself has meant that a lot of Canadian military history as well as its current and future endeavours are tied to the UK (until the Second World War), and then increasingly with the United States and other western powers through the NATO alliance, in which both the UK and Canada encouraged US participation.

The wars Canada has fought have frequently been distant conflicts in which Canada has participated because of its alliances with UK, and then with the US. This was true of the Second Boer War, the World Wars, the Korean War, the Cold War,<sup>12</sup> the Afghan War and many others in which Canada participated. Canada has asserted its right as a sovereign state in committing its military, but it has followed the lead of other great powers when making that commitment. Canada’s association with the British, who played a major role in the establishment of Canada and whose monarch is still the head of state for Canada, and with the US, with whom Canada shares the longest border in the world as well as close diplomatic and trade relations, has led Canada to combat. Canada has been following others into war because, as Barnes (2006) notes, Canada does not have enough force projection capabilities to protect its own sovereignty and

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<sup>12</sup> The Cold War was not a war like the other wars on this list; rather, it was a period and a conflictual relationship of insecurity and combat preparedness with which the Canadian state, its public, and its military had to contend.

relies instead on the US — before that, on the UK — for ensuring its security. The immense force projection capability of the US and its proximity to Canada secures the country against large scale attack, but also generates an expectation of reciprocity.

Many Canadians think Canada holds a special place in international security on the issue of peacekeeping. Peacekeeping in its modern avatar, beginning with the UN Expeditionary Force, was a notion contrived by Canadian diplomat, and later Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson among others (Dorn 2005). While peacekeeping did not fit the traditional state-on-state war model that was, and to some extent remains, the domain of the military, it provided a new way for the state to use its military as a foreign policy instrument with limited costs, at least compared to all-out war. Peacekeeping also provided a way for the military to continue to exist beyond the idea of absolute or total war. The military was no longer an auxiliary branch of the government that had no purpose beyond defending against external threats and some domestic engagement such as search and rescue operations, support of police and other civil authorities in the case of armed insurrection (as in the case of the Oka crisis of 1990), and natural disasters (such as the ice storm of 1998 that crippled infrastructure in eastern Ontario and much of southern Quebec). Rather, the Canadian military, along with other participating UN states' militaries, could now be deployed to keep the peace elsewhere.

Many Canadians think of peacekeeping as the preferred role for the Canadian military for several reasons: Pearson's role in its formulation, its aim of keeping the peace instead of starting more wars, its lower impact on the state and its military than all-out war, and, to some extent, its role in differentiating Canada from the US. There is a certain romanticization of peacekeeping that continues in the minds of many Canadians even though, in recent years, Canada has not been contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions with the same frequency

or in the same numbers (James, Michaud, and O'Reilly 2006). The peacekeeper strategic narrative also reinforced Canadians' support for peacekeeping, even though the number of troop contributions went down.

The Canadian public's support for peacekeeping means that it is a politically sound idea for politicians of all stripes to support. In other words, most politicians try to align military deployments with the notion of peacekeeping, peacebuilding, etc. For instance, the Afghan War was sold to Canadians as mainly a stabilization mission that would focus on peacebuilding and reconstruction operations with the military engaging in combat if needed. To be fair, Prime Minister Chrétien who was initially "selling" the Afghan mission also thought that the mission would not last long and would indeed be focused on the stabilization of Afghanistan, which would in turn have a positive impact on Canadian national security, the war on terror, and Canada's solidarity with allies (Boucher and Nossal 2017; Pigott 2007; Stein and Lang 2007). Peacekeeping brings the focus to soft power, which translates into fewer defence budget commitments, commitments that are more easily reneged upon because the military does not need as much firepower for peacekeeping (Richter 2006).

A number of academics and military personnel have argued that the primacy that peacekeeping acquired in Canadians' minds meant that Canadians "forgot" that Canada was indeed a "warrior nation" that played a role in many of the 20th century's major conflicts (see, for instance, Granatstein 2002, 2008; Horn 2002, 2006; Morton 1970, 1981, 1992). Peacekeeping, at least as it was imagined by Pearson, also required some warfighting skills to deter the opposing sides, which is why the military is an ideal candidate for it. Many personnel and academics, however, see it as constabulary duty rather than the "real" task of the military — defending the state from external threats (Kasurak 2013). Then there are academics who think

that Canadians are becoming increasingly militarized (see, for instance, Berland and Fitzpatrick 2010; Fremeth 2010). McKay and Swift (2012) argue that under the Harper government, there was an ongoing revanchism to bring to the forefront the warrior past of Canada that had been eclipsed for decades by the focus on peacekeeping in Canadian minds.

If a relationship exists in the mind of military personnel and military supporters between the ascendance of the peacekeeper narrative and the decline of the Canadian military capabilities, it is not an unfair assumption on their parts. Certainly, this is not a simple causal connection because there are other factors that contributed to the decline of the Canadian military's capabilities (for instance, the ongoing problems with procurement). Nonetheless, if the military were to engage in more traditional military tasks such as war and combat operations, then it would appear more relevant, at least relevant enough that it would have access to newer equipment. What this has translated to is an interest in the military strategically communicating the "warrior nation" narrative. If the public conceptualizes the Canadian military as warriors rather than "merely" peacekeepers, then it would be more likely to support improving military capabilities. This appeared to be the Harper government's aim, and it did bring more public attention to the military (McKay and Swift 2012). During the Afghan War, convincing the public of the military's warrior nature was made easier. The emergence and adoption of social media during the middle years of the Afghan War provided another platform for the politicians and the military to persuade the public.

The public, however it is imagined and however it forms itself, is not always easily persuaded. Canadians have historically seen war as something that is "happily, beyond their shores" (Morton 1992, ix). For Canadians, because war is fought elsewhere, the military is not an important department or part of the state apparatus as it might be in countries like India or

Israel. As Gizewski et al. (1994, 90) note, “While there have always been sporadic criticisms of military policy, Canada has never been a nation in which the military has held a particularly prominent place, at least in the minds of Canadians.” Raising the military to prominence requires a shift in the peacekeeper strategic narrative, a change that the Harper government actively sought through the framing of Canada as a warrior nation.

Certainly, the Canadian public prioritizes many other areas of concern before the military. It might not be far-fetched to argue that Canadians really don’t pay attention to the military unless something goes wrong. In the case of Somalia, the public paid attention because of some soldiers’ abuses and the subsequent attempts to cover up events. In the case of Afghanistan, the public paid attention because Canadian soldiers either made the ultimate sacrifice or returned injured in body and mind. More recently, the military has received attention for its mishandling of allegations of sexual misconduct. Perhaps some of this negative attention could be blamed on the traditional news media that usually only consider bad news worthy of reporting because sensationalism sells. Even so, the public appears to be happy to leave defence and security policy considerations primarily, if not entirely, in the hands of government elites.

### **Canadian Civil-Military Relations**

In Canada, the civil-military relations prescription for civilian supremacy has been deeply entrenched since the Confederation era: the government decides what the military’s commitments will be. Combined with an ‘everything but the military first’ attitude, the national defence policy is, thus, primarily “about budgets, not strategies” (Bland 2000b, 34). The military needs to plan for its day-to-day activities including, but not limited to, training,

equipment maintenance, and administrative and strategic planning according to the security environment. The civilian government's threat assessments might not align with the military's assessments, which in turn can create contention around budgetary allowances that dictate whether the military can follow its plans. While the civilian government has comprehensive control over the Canadian military, that control is not always executed in an effective and efficient manner (Bland 2000a).

The military rarely has recourse if the government proposes questionable policy. Disagreement would be grounds for dismissal for military leaders. On the other hand, Bland (2000b) points out that while the military demands attention, it appreciates it only if the government agrees with the military's ideas and preferences (see also Kasurak 2013). The problems are these — the government often does not set out clear objectives for the military and does not provide adequate funding for the objectives it does set out. The government and the military have also occasionally been more ambitious than what is expected of Canada's middle power status, which has created frustration and friction between them.

The central problem of civil-military relations in Canada, thus, comes from the political actors' indifference to the details of the design and implementation of defence policy, and the military's habit of constructing procedures and plans as though that indifference was license to shape defence outcomes and the Canadian Armed Forces to the self-defined needs and interests of the military personnel (Kasurak 2013). The political elite are often engaged in wishful thinking, while the military ignores this inattentiveness in its planning and is often disappointed when those plans can not come to fruition because of lack of political interest and funding. Crises occur whenever governments suddenly take an interest and find themselves committed to plans or policies that they have never properly considered (ibid.).

Military personnel, unlike many political elite however, see a continuing crisis resulting from political neglect of a vital aspect of national policy and a necessary institution. It is not trite to say that the chief characteristic of civil-military relations in Canada is “silence, interrupted by periodic surprise and discord” (Bland 2000b, 50). Such temperamental civil-military relations create instability for the military as well as the foreign policy of the state. As Bland (2001, 536-537) notes, the cardinal rule for democracies at war is that victory depends on “unifying the people, the government, and the armed forces in what they believe is a just cause.” Unstable civil-military relations and weak military policy, however, can hardly encourage the public’s faith in the government’s decision-making on foreign engagements for the military.

Canada’s political system is also highly centralized, which reduces the influence of those outside the executive: “Canada’s highly centralized political structure allows for substantial executive autonomy with regards to troop deployment. The Prime Minister can, without parliamentary approval, deploy the Canadian Forces abroad in times of peace and crisis. Legislators may express their concerns and opposition, but their ability to influence the executive is greatly limited. This is especially the case when the government holds a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. The PM further exercises almost unconstrained personal authority over his cabinet and political party, most notably through party discipline and ministerial appointments” (Massie 2016, 52). What this high level of executive autonomy also means is that the state’s security narratives might be re-interpreted based on the ideological leanings of the incoming ruling party, which would affect what the military is expected to do and communicate.



An example of a shifting narrative relevant to this dissertation emerged with the Harper government's ascendance to power in 2006. Prime Minister Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada initially were more hawkish than their Liberal predecessors, and the Harper government for its own political purposes sought to move away from the "peacekeeper" narrative to a "warrior nation" strategic narrative (Domansky, Jensen, and Bryson 2012; Gravelle et al. 2014; McKay and Swift 2012; Massie 2016). This effort to create a different image of Canada did not sit well with many Canadians who still identified with the peacekeeping narrative, which drove down support for the Afghan mission. In order to shore up public support, the Harper government then shifted to a more internationalist approach by focusing on peacebuilding, in particular on the narrative of promoting the rights and welfare of Afghan women and children (Boucher and Nossal 2017; Massie 2016; Wegner 2016). Mixing narratives by moving to the warrior nation identity and then "correcting" to a more internationalist approach only confused the Canadian public about whether Canada was in Afghanistan on a combat or peace mission (Massie 2016).

The government's poor management of the strategic narrative(s) likely contributed to the decline in public support for the Afghan mission. As Boucher and Nossal (2017, 58–59) note, "The government's messaging in the Afghanistan mission was chaotic, with the rationales and justifications offered for the mission undergoing frequent and notable shifts. Indeed, given the justifications on offer, we hypothesize that the politicians in Ottawa were themselves perplexed as to why Canada was in Afghanistan." The military likely remained "apolitical" and did not have a role in shaping these narrative(s). It was, thus, spared being associated with the resulting appearance of narrative incoherence because it was not communicating directly with the public via Twitter and other social media. Even when CAF began communicating

government narratives via social media around 2007, it operationalized them and communicated through an organizational lens, which might have prevented the military from appearing to be part of the narrative chaos.

Another complication in the civil-military relationship is that Canada is not militarily strong enough to intervene internationally on its own, so when it does intervene, it has to do so in partnership with other states, usually the United States and/or NATO. Such partnerships mean that Canada's defence and foreign policy is constrained by the decisions its partners make. As Saideman and Hampson (2015, 5) note, "The Canadian public has rarely been warmly disposed or strongly opposed to these overseas military engagements and public support has been lukewarm at best. ... This ambivalence or uncertainty [of the public] gives Canadian politicians and parties significant room to operate." The will of the domestic public is important for political parties to stay in power, but it takes time for that will to coalesce decisively. Governments can get away with much in the meantime, especially if they can craft a persuasive strategic narrative, which is promoted by the military's strategic communication.

### **Canadian Military and Information Strategy**

The Canadian military came into its own with regards to public information strategy during World War II. During World War I, information management, particularly censorship, was rooted in "trial-and-error" and the voluntary compliance of the press (Kerr 1982). Information from the fronts reached home in the letters that personnel wrote to their families, and these letters were occasionally published in the newspapers in all their gruesome detail because of errors in censorship or the press' misunderstanding of what they were allowed to publish (Copp 2005; Kerr 1982). CAF suffered the consequences of not managing public

information well. For example, the RCN became nicknamed the “tin-pot” navy and a “bum-boat fleet” despite fulfilling all that the government asked of it during World War I; however, during the Second World War, the RCN became the “wavy navy” due to strategic communication about its successes and participation in important battles such as the Battle of the Atlantic (Hadley 2014, 35–37).

During World War II, the government became much more interested in using information strategically not only to preserve operational security, but also to garner domestic support for military operations. The Bureau of Public Information was established and strengthened to ensure that the government could tell the “story straight to the people” to gather public support instead of relying on the newspapers and their biases of reporting (Young 1978, 221). Eventually, the Bureau of Public Information transformed into the Wartime Information Board intended to improve Canada’s image among Allies, particularly the US (ibid.). The military’s control over the reporters’ accreditation and enforced censorship along with academic approaches to managing and manipulating public opinion at the Wartime Information Board made for a well-organized strategic communication effort (Balzer 2011; Young 1978). Concerns about public opinion manipulation through propaganda eventually led to the disbandment of the Wartime Information Board, but the importance of information management remained with the politicians and bureaucrats. Currently, both the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have personnel and other departmental resources committed to public affairs.

One of the most resonant Canadian strategic narratives about security emerged after World War II in 1956 when Lester B. Pearson suggested that an international force, under the banner of the United Nations, stand between Egypt and the coalition of Israeli, British, and

French forces to ensure that tensions around the nationalization of the Suez Canal did not escalate further (Dorn 2005). Modern peacekeeping came about with a Canadian's help. The United Nations Emergency Force was also deployed under the command of a Canadian, Gen. E.L.M. Burns (Anker 2005). Canadians, thus, feel particularly proud and protective of the idea of peacekeeping. This public love for peacekeeping has made "Canada as peacekeeper" one of the most enduring Canadian strategic narratives.

The Canadian mission in Afghanistan was framed as Canada helping to restore peace and stability, even though the military did engage in combat operations (Anker 2005). Regarding the emphasis of domestic crowd-pleasing work done in Afghanistan, Ankersen (2014, 153) argues, "The strategic narrative is the result of a collaboration (implicit as much as explicit) between the various agents. The narrative itself is not an end, but rather a means to help perpetuate the state's response to the problem (multi-faceted as it is) represented by Afghanistan. Without such a narrative, military operations — and military operations represented the lion's share of Canada's 'whole of government' approach — could not be sustained." There is a feedback loop built into the formation and promotion of the strategic narrative: interactions among public, military, and state shape the narrative, while the narrative shapes the actions of the actors in turn. In Afghanistan, the public preferred a peacebuilding and reconstruction storyline, so the government narrative revolved around a "whole of government" approach even though the military was involved much more heavily than civilian government personnel in both reconstruction and counterinsurgency operations. The Harper government's move to a "warrior nation" narrative helped and was helped by the military's engagement in and communication about the operations in Afghanistan.

## *Twitter*

Twitter is a social media platform for generating microblogs or microposts. With strict limits on how much content can be uploaded at a time, microblogs allow users to share short sentences, photos, or videos as a means of expressing themselves (Kaplan and Haenlein 2011, 106). Twitter allows users to post short messages or tweets up to 140<sup>13</sup> — now 280 — characters long (Weller et al. 2013). Twitter users can “follow” other users in order to see the other users’ tweets. All public tweets are visible to all Twitter users. Twitter also allows users to retweet, that is, user A can share user B’s tweet with their own — user A’s — followers. Users can also mark a tweet as a “favourite” in order to express that they like that tweet. Marking tweets as a favourite also allows users to review them at a later time unless the original tweeter deletes the tweet. Because of the public nature of the data on Twitter, it is an important and easily accessible resource with respect to ongoing discourse around current topics.

With the evolution of social media and access to a variety of news and information sources, citizen-government interactions are changing (Panagiotopoulos, Bigdeli, and Sams 2014). Twitter, for instance, provides immediate communication with the public through brief messages with links to detailed information. Twitter also allows users to engage in “ad-hoc” one-to-one or one-to-many conversations with others (ibid.). Despite the conversational capabilities provided by Twitter and other social media platforms, most government activity on social media remains informational with limited public engagement. Even without engagement, social media are useful for government and public institutions because they make it easier to share information (Hong 2013). Social media also increase the reach of the government because

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<sup>13</sup> In 2017, the Twitter character limit was changed to 280 characters, but my data were collected in 140-character limit era.

they break down barriers of space and time. This transparency and extended reach can translate into increased public trust in the government.

Some aspects of Twitter can be utilized to engage the public more deeply. The direct response to specific followers using the @ function can lead to more retweets and can generate more involved responses from other users as well. The dialogic component of Twitter, however, is risky. For instance, financial institution JPMorgan Chase learned a tough lesson with its #AskJPM hashtag that had people expressing their discontentment with the company with questions such as “Did you have a specific number of people’s lives you needed to ruin before you considered your business model a success?” and “What section of the poor & disenfranchised have you yet to exploit for profit, & how are you working to address that?” (Greenhouse 2013). The military cannot use social media the same way as politicians do because it not free to say what it wants, but it can still plan for public engagement through strategic communication.

Twitter, Murthy (2012) argues, is largely concerned with self-presentation and self-production so posts about the commonplace and banal become a way of affirming one’s existence and inventing oneself. Tweeting then becomes a part of “identity maintenance” captured in the modified Cartesian aphorism “I tweet, therefore I am” (ibid., 1063). As Papacharissi (2015, 94) notes, “Twitter affords a platform for potentially rich and variable public or private *performances of the self* through condensed statements that frequently manifest a converged response to sociocultural, economic, and political issues. This is not a new phenomenon as everyday political commentary that develops in casual conversation will possess this confluence. The platform of Twitter, however, arguably makes this confluence

more visible” [emphasis added]. Twitter, then, is a space for identity formation and performance of the self.

### **Organizational Identity as Performed Strategic Communication**

Organizational tweets can be understood as the organization performing its identity. Strategic communication refers to the planned nature of the performance as well as the intent to achieve a particular goal, even if that goal is as “simple” as arriving at and/or maintaining an identity that is credible and legitimate in the public’s eyes. The military performs its organizational identity through its strategic communication online. Social media such as Twitter provide a space for the performance of the Canadian military’s identity as a *Canadian* and *military* institution. Because the performance of identity/storytelling takes place in a social space, the performance of self is not just about the organization, but also about the social, economic, political, and cultural networks within which it exists. No performance is simply about the organization, it is about how that organization’s story fits into the other stories that are being simultaneously performed, which in the case of CAF is primarily the strategic narrative of the state.

Performance takes multiple forms online from texts to photos and videos. Text remains an important mode of performing one’s identity on Twitter, even as newer, more image-oriented social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat have gained popularity. According to Papacharissi (2015, 97), “Language is an essential enabler of performativity as it both describes and communicates a form of doing. For a textually based platform like Twitter, language is employed to convey both verbal and non-verbal performative gestures. . . . The use of words not only communicates a material act but is also reiterative of conventions and customs that reflect

context and established ways of doing and speaking about things.” What Twitter and other social media allow the military to do then is to perform<sup>14</sup> its own identity as it is shaped by its past, present, and imagined future(s) as well as the government, the public, and the allies.

Performance also allows actors to claim “symbolic capital” when they narrate their role within the networks they inhabit (Papacharissi 2015, 97). Symbolic capital is the “accumulation of reputation,” which can easily be converted into political capital (Fuchs 2014b, 116). In the civil-military relationship that is circumscribed by the principle of civil control over the military, the military can gain symbolic and therefore, political capital by reflecting the government’s strategic narratives in its strategic communication. Doing so would not only enhance the value of the military in the eyes of the government, which would see the military as an ally in the promotion of its narratives, but also improve the military’s reputation in the public eye with the military’s performance of submissiveness to the civilian government.

Organizational communication sustains other narratives when the communication interprets external events through the organization’s position within particular networks (Papacharissi 2015, 97). The military is likely to support the narratives that emerge from the government, not only because it *has to* do so in the public eye under the strictures of civil-military relations theory, but also because there are narratives and performances that bind the military to the government and vice versa. The stories and identities of these actors — the state, the government, the public, and the military — are so close that there are overlaps in the performances of their stories of their respective “selves.” The Canadian government performs Canadianness just as the Canadian military does. Defense and security are parts of a government’s performance, though to a lesser degree than they are a part of the military’s

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<sup>14</sup> According to Goffman (1956, 8), “A ‘performance’ may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants.” The social media posts of an organization (or any other entity), therefore, can also be understood as constituting a performance.



performance. When these performances of identity in the form of strategic communication overlap, they frequently work to reinforce and amplify the shared strategic narrative(s).

### **Strategic Narratives, Strategic Communication, and Twitter**

Organizations' social media presence usually has a positive impact on organization-public relations (see, for instance, Ibrahim, Wang, and Bourne 2017; Saffer, Sommerfeldt, and Taylor 2013; Wallace, Buil, and de Chernatony 2017). These platforms allow organizations to tell their own story directly to the public and give the public the opportunity to ask the organizations to account for their actions. The opportunity for the public to follow what the military is doing and interact with the military via likes, follows, direct messages, or a direct response from the military is invaluable because of the way it helps build a public-military relationship and keeps the military accountable to the public. Strategic communication, therefore, is good for the organization because it keeps the organization accountable and the public informed.

Accountability via social media takes the form of bursts of information on what the military is doing from training to combat to disaster relief in various parts of the world. This information reaches the public directly instead of through government officials. Because the information is shared through a more informal medium than a news broadcast or a minister's speech and because the platforms themselves are socially oriented, the information sharing takes on a more conversational tone, which might allow people to view the military as part of Canadian society rather than a distant symbol of the state.

Because the current information environment provides news and other communication rapidly, being on social media allows the military to be aware of where the public sentiment

lies. For instance, around the time President Trump signed a ban on transgender people serving in the military, CAF sent out the following tweet welcoming people of all gender and sexual orientations to work with CAF:



This tweet is an example of how the military can use social media to share information about the institution and to encourage the people of Canada to identify with the military. The tweet above also shows how the military’s organization-centric strategic communication can draw upon and support a socially accepted strategic narrative such as Canadian multiculturalism, a value held in high esteem by the Trudeau government under which this tweet was posted.

## **Chapter 4: Methods**

The starting point for my research was a curiosity about how the military uses social media. Because I am located in Canada, I decided to focus on the Canadian Armed Forces' use of social media. The research question that emerged from my preliminary literature review was this: How are the Canadian Armed Forces using Twitter? Starting with an overview of the methodological approach, I follow with the rationale for my choice of method, a description of the data and its collection, an overview of the coding and analysis process, and an acknowledgement of my known biases.

### ***Methodological Approach***

The overall methodological approach I used was qualitative because it allowed me to approach knowledge building as “generative and process-oriented” (Leavy 2014, 3). Qualitative approaches focus on the context, the language, and the variety of texts that are available for analysis. Further, there is quite a vast literature that tackles social media analysis, military or otherwise, from a quantitative perspective (see, for instance, Anderson 2015; Criado, Rojas-Martín, and Gil-Garcia 2017; Kwak et al. 2010; Liu and Kim 2011; Wallace et al. 2014) or a mixed methods perspective where the qualitative portion of methods is often guided by the results from the quantitative methods (see, for instance, Chan et al. 2016; Eckert et al. 2017; Rohm, Kaltcheva, and Milne 2013; Schröder and Kobbernagel 2016; Wittmeier et al. 2014). Social media have also been analyzed from a critical perspective (see, for instance, Fuchs 2014a; Terranova 2004).

Qualitative analyses of social media have been mostly smaller-n studies focused on interviewing as the data collection method (see, for instance, DiStaso, McCorkindale, and Wright 2011; Garrett and Cutting 2012; Meijer and Thaens 2013). While I too had initially intended to conduct interviews, I was denied permission to interview CAF personnel by the Social Science Research Review Board associated with the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis. Instead, I decided to analyze CAF tweets on their official accounts. My decision to proceed with a qualitative perspective, despite a lack of interviews, meant that I was analyzing a large amount of social media data — nearly 15,000 tweets — manually. While there were gaps in my knowledge that create limitations in the absence of interview data, I think the large-n qualitative tweet analysis provides a fresher way of looking at social media.

The qualitative approach is also open to other possibilities and does not claim to provide the only or the definitive answer. From the qualitative perspective, Leavy (2014, 3) argues, “The truth is not absolute and ready to be ‘discovered’ by ‘objective’ researchers, but rather it is contingent, contextual, and multiple.” The sensitivity to interpretation and its limitations is central to the qualitative approach, and such sensitivity is particularly relevant in my case because I conduct my research on an emerging communication phenomenon as an outsider to the organization. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 10) write, “The word qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured [if measured at all] ... Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry.” The military’s strategic communication is first and foremost a social process insofar as it exists within the parameters of

a particular society. Focusing on the qualitative allows the social aspects of the communication process to emerge.

The social aspects of the research are given primacy in qualitative research, which provides detailed and context-rich findings at the end of the process (Branthwaite and Patterson 2011). Further, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 10) argue, qualitative researchers “emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning” [original emphasis]. My research question, because it deals with *how* CAF uses Twitter and attempts to map the organizational story that the military communicates in a public space, is ripe for a qualitative approach. How the Canadian military uses Twitter, when explored from a qualitative perspective, also sheds light on not only the military, but also the government through the strategic narratives that are uncovered.

### ***Grounded Theory Method***

I decided to use Grounded Theory Method (GTM) because it demands that any conclusions the researcher draws should be grounded in the data first before referring to what the literature states the data “should” say. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, 1) argue, grounded theory is the process of “discovery of theory from data.” In other words, GTM allows for the data to tell the story instead of making data fit a pre-existing theoretical framework. Further, Strauss (1987, 22) defines grounded theory as a systematic and intense data analysis conducted “often sentence by sentence, or phrase by phrase of the field note, interview, or other document” and subjected to constant coding and comparisons for the construction of a theory that is rooted in the data. Such an intensive approach was useful for my data because of the way I chose to frame the question. How the Canadian Armed Forces are using social media cannot be

answered through previously written literature; it can only be answered through analyzing in depth the data that are generated by CAF social media.

What is especially useful about GTM is that it is not just a data collection and analysis method; rather, it is a theory development process rooted firmly in the data. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, 6) explain, “Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data, but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research.” GTM emerges from the idea that relevant concepts are not a priori to research, that interesting concepts can and do emerge from the data (Howell 2013). Relying on data for theory allows for innovation in the social sciences because new ways of thinking can surface when concepts and patterns in the data are studied on their own terms instead of being forced to fit into predefined categories dictated by existing theories. As Howell (2013) further argues, grounded theory is based on the idea that research should be grounded in current reality, and the researcher should discover what happens in the field instead of in a library. This inclination of the method towards understanding what is happening now in the “real world” is also relevant to both the organization and the communication medium I am studying: the military and social media, respectively.

GTM is also a method that is sensitive to the trials and ambiguities inherent in the research process, particularly when studying un- or underexplored phenomena. As Charmaz (2008, 155) noted, grounded theory is an emergent method, and as such is “particularly well suited for studying uncharted, contingent, or dynamic phenomena.” The world of social media is certainly dynamic with only some charting of its landscape having been done so far. The military’s use of social media, particularly within the context of the military’s engagement with the government and the public in operational regions, is also relatively understudied. Thus,

given the evolving and underexplored nature of my subjects of research, grounded theory seemed an appropriate method.

Grounded theory is based on abductive reasoning that “invokes imaginative interpretations because the researcher imagines all possible theoretical accounts for the observed data and then forms and checks hypotheses until arriving at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data” (Charmaz 2008, 157). Because the starting point for my research question was my instinct about strategic communication, using abductive reasoning to work through what the data implied from a theoretical perspective was invaluable. Since this mode of reasoning aims to provide one of many possible explanations, there was limited pressure to provide the “only possible” explanation. As Aliseda (2006, 28) explains, “Abduction is thinking from evidence to explanation, a type of reasoning characteristic of many different situations with incomplete information.” Thus, following abductive reasoning allowed me to look at existing studies and my data to come to my own theoretical conclusions, even in the absence of input from CAF personnel.

Further, abductive reasoning allows new hypotheses to appear at every level of analysis, and “the interpretation of the data is not finalized at an early stage but that new codes, categories, and theories can be developed and redeveloped if necessary” (Reichertz 2007, 224). In other words, the process of reasoning is iterative and encourages thinking about and re-interpreting the data and its analysis as needed throughout the research process. Every aspect of the research from the rationale for data and the explanations derived from the analysis remain open to being “defeated” at any point in time (Aliseda 2006, 31). Even now, as the research is “finished,” the findings remain open for analysis and re-interpretation, which speaks to Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) view of theory as process.

Grounded theory was also the most useful method because it required flexibility and simultaneity with respect to the data gathering and analysis processes. As Strauss (1987, 5) has noted grounded theory is “not really a specific method or technique. Rather it is a style of doing qualitative analysis that includes a number of distinct features, such as theoretical sampling, and certain methodological guidelines, such as the making of constant comparisons and the use of a coding paradigm, to ensure conceptual development and density.” When I was denied permission to conduct interviews with CAF public affairs personnel, using grounded theory allowed me to adapt the method to the new parameters of my research including changing my research questions as well as my planned data sources. Grounded theory should be seen as “a set of principles and practices, not as prescriptions or packages” (Charmaz 2006, 9). The adaptability of the method allowed me to change the method to the needs of the research. For instance, because the method was open to analyzing any text as data, I was able to switch to analyzing CAF tweets instead of analyzing transcripts of interviews with CAF public affairs personnel.

A constructivist approach to GTM acknowledges that the data present “multiple individual realities influenced by context” including the researcher’s knowledge and perspective (Mills, Bonner, and Francis 2006, 26; see also Charmaz 2005, 2006). As Charmaz (2006, 130) notes, “A constructivist approach places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data.” While my own research did not have participants, I did attempt to learn enough about CAF as an organization in order that Canadian military history — both older and more contemporary history — could “stand in” as a representation of CAF as an organizational participant. Charmaz (2006, 130) notes, “Constructivists study *how* — and sometimes *why* —



participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations” [original emphasis]. My task then was to interpret not only the tweets, but also the organizational stance, motive, or intent with respect to those tweets in the absence of access to CAF public affairs personnel who might have illuminated those for me.

GTM puts a lot of trust in researchers’ instincts that are emerge from the data that they analyze in depth, their personal experiences, those that they speak with about the project, and existing theory. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, 251) note, “The root sources of all significant theorizing is the sensitive insights of the observer himself [sic].” Reflecting on my own biography as someone who grew up in a military environment certainly helped me better understand the data and the research process. Glaser and Strauss (1967) use the example of interviewees when they talk about experiential insights from someone other than the researcher. I found that conversations with members of my dissertation committee; my father, an officer retired from the Indian Army; and other retired CAF personnel offered or led me to insights and/or confirmed some insights that I was hesitant to state without external reinforcement.

As cautious as Glaser and Strauss (1967) require the researcher to be about letting pre-existing grand theories overpower the data, they do acknowledge the role that knowledge of these theories can play in generating insights for the researcher: “Such existing sources of insights are to be cultivated, though not at the expense of insights generated by the qualitative research, which are still closer to the data” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 253). The data remain the primary source of insights, followed by insights from the researcher’s and others’ personal experiences, intuitions, and existing theory. Learning about the Canadian military’s history, for instance, made me aware of strategic communication efforts in CAF’s past and contemporary

operations, and how those efforts related to the strategic narratives of the government and the state.

## **Data**

In order to narrow the scope of my research, I decided to use Twitter as representative of social media. The rationale for using Twitter is two-fold. First, tweets are generated in a public space and anyone can access this data. Because of the public nature of Twitter as well as the public nature of CAF, using Twitter posts did not create ethical concerns for the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board. Using other social media sites such as Facebook might have been much more ethically complex because while CAF accounts are public pages, individual accounts on the site are treated as private spaces. This privacy issue would have created ethical problems if I shared individuals' responses to CAF's public posts because individual posters might be unaware that their response could be accessed by others. Second, tweets can be extracted from Twitter using its application programming interface (API). Thus, Twitter was not only the best option from an ethical perspective, but also the most feasible.

I received a list of Twitter handles approved by the Department of National Defence Canada via an Access to Information request submitted to the department. The list contained 71 Twitter handles. Of these 71, four accounts were the main Canadian Armed Forces account along with the Army, Navy, and Air Force accounts. The Canadian Joint Operations Command and the Canada at NATO Twitter accounts were more internationally oriented. Ten accounts were individual accounts including those of the Governor General, the Prime Minister and other ministers, and high-ranking commissioned and noncommissioned officers. Various divisions, brigades, regiments, ships, Canadian Forces bases, and regional groups such as the Maritime

Forces Atlantic together held 26 Twitter accounts. Four of the approved handles were international partner handles for NATO, NORAD, ISAF, and the UN. Nine Twitter handles were for military family resources centres. There were 17 other accounts that were related to CAF but in a tangential manner because of their orientation towards a narrowly-defined scope such as cadet accounts, programs for CAF personnel, civilian foundations to support CAF, etc.

While all these accounts together form a detailed picture of the Canadian Armed Forces' Twitter use, I chose to analyze only four of the total 71 accounts for two main reasons. First, the Canadian Armed Forces, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, and Royal Canadian Air Force accounts provide abundant material aimed mainly at their imagined publics, which appears to be composed largely of the Canadian public and tangentially at their other national and international publics. These accounts also retweet tweets from most of the other accounts that these four accounts think are relevant to the public at large, so I got most of the tweets that the organization deems important just by gathering the tweets from these four accounts.

The other accounts that I left out often had too broad or too narrow an area about which they tweeted or they tweeted about defence only occasionally. For instance, I had initially considered including the Canada at NATO account because the Canadian military often works with allies and other militaries under the auspices of NATO; however, I decided to not include the account because NATO is a military alliance with science, technology, and economic committees, and I did not wish to muddy the military orientation of the rest of the data with the mixed bag of tweets from Canada at NATO. Another example would be the Prime Minister's Twitter, which contained tweets that related to an extremely wide variety of topics of which defence was but one.

In the too narrow an area of focus were the Twitter accounts for the military family resource centres and some of the Canadian Forces Bases across Canada. I chose not to use those tweets because they were extremely specific in nature with respect to the services they provided and because of their specialization they would be serving a narrowly-defined audience. Second, the four accounts I chose to analyze tweets from were also some of the most heavily followed Twitter accounts from the list. At 1700 hours Eastern Standard Time on June 13, 2016, the main Canadian Armed Forces Twitter account — @CanadianForces — had 50,657 followers, while the Naval Reserve Twitter account — @NAVRESNAV — had 2,122 followers. Interpreting a large number of followers as indicative of a broader public impact of these accounts may be a simplistic interpretation that may not be true keeping in mind the fickle nature of social media as well as the nature of networks; however, there is a common sense, abductive rationale that lends weight to this simple argument.

I decided to focus on the four main CAF accounts for the Canadian Armed Forces, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, and Royal Canadian Air Force and analyze as many tweets as I could extract in order to understand what information the Canadian military is sharing on Twitter. I used the website *www.greptweet.com*<sup>15</sup> to extract approximately 3000 tweets per Twitter account. Greptweet allowed easy extraction of tweets with the tweet number, date and time, and text of the tweet (Saka 2018; Shafi 2017; Steinert-Threlkeld 2016; Synnott, Coulias, and Ioannou 2017). Researchers interested in gathering other data such as number of likes and retweets of each tweet and other metadata would need to utilize another service. By extracting tweets over several months, from September 2015 to December 2015, I accrued close to 15,000 tweets from all four accounts. Table 2 shows the breakdown of how many tweets

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<sup>15</sup> Twitter suspended Greptweet in August 2016; however, the programmer has made the code available if others wish to recreate the service.

were gathered from which account and the date range of the gathered tweets with some tweets dating as far back as September 2012:

<b>Account Holder</b>	<b>Twitter Handle</b>	<b>Tweets</b>	<b>Tweets' Timeline</b>
Canadian Armed Forces	@CanadianForces	4,004	Dec. 2014–Dec. 2015
Royal Canadian Air Force	@RCAF_ARC	3,443	Nov. 2014–Dec. 2015
Royal Canadian Navy	@RCN_MRC	3,663	Apr. 2013–Dec. 2015
Canadian Army	@CanadianArmy	3,603	Sept. 2012–Dec. 2015
	Total Tweets	14,713	

*Table 2: Number of tweets gathered from each CAF Twitter account and the duration of time the collected tweets represents.*

At one point in the research process, I also considered extracting tweets from the accounts of individuals who indicated that they were serving CAF personnel. I did not do so for three main reasons. First, I was concerned about the ethics of using individuals' tweets in a dissertation that would become a public document. Moreno et al. (2013, 709) note that if access to the social media site is public and if information is "identifiable, but not private" and can be gathered without interacting with the person who shared it online, then the proposed research does not fulfill the criteria of research involving human subjects. However, Moreno et al. (2013, 709) do argue that if observational research that does not involve human interaction "could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation," then such research is not exempt from ethical considerations.

Even though the tweets are public, I would not have been able to proceed ethically without permission from the individual account holders. As Marotzki, Holze, and Verständig (2014, 461) have argued, “A researcher has to consider that even if data are publicly accessible, users may not necessarily be aware of the fact that their information can easily be taken away.” This might be true in the case of CAF personnel who might not realize that their personal accounts on Twitter could be mined by a researcher for data and put into a public document. Even though most CAF personnel would know that Twitter is a public space and their tweets could be picked up by others, I did not wish to analyze their tweets without their permission. As Rooke (2013, 266) argues that even with passive research, or what Moreno et al. (2013) call observational research, individuals may not be mindful of the publicness of a space because often “individual join groups for the interaction and association, and do not expect to be test subjects, unless explicitly noted as the reason for the group. If some form of registration is required, subscribers are likely to regard the space as a ‘Private Place.’” Thus, using CAF personnel’s tweets without their permission would not be ethical.

Second, it would be difficult to gauge what individual personnels’ reach and audience is as well as their relationship with and impact on the larger strategic narrative of the government and the strategic communication of the organization. The official CAF Twitter accounts are likely to have a much broader reach, based on number of followers and retweets, than individual accounts. Individual accounts, while they can occasionally provide insights into the organization, can also be quite limited in their scope to the interests of the individuals. As Papacharissi (2015) noted, social media accounts are about performing identity, so individual social media accounts would likely focus more on the individual identities of the CAF personnel

than on the identity of the organization. Thus, while permission to use individual CAF members' tweets could be sought, I chose not to collect or analyze CAF personnel's tweets.

Third, I was also interested in the larger security narrative constructed by the Canadian Armed Forces. While the public gets to hear from the Minister of National Defence, opposition defence critics, and other DND personnel through the mainstream media when defence and security related events occur, I was interested in what the military had to say as an organization on its own, *separate* from the civilian Department of National Defence Canada, even though most of CAF's communication is probably vetted by DND or CAF self-censoring as per CMR expectations. More importantly, I was interested in what the military had to say over time and in an ongoing manner about its role domestically and internationally. I am aware that the official tweets that I ended up analyzing were mostly, if not entirely, planned tweets that went through an official — potentially multi-stage — approval process before being posted to ensure they followed appropriate protocol. Nonetheless, I think that these tweets shed a light on how the Canadian military uses social media.

## **Research Process**

I began the research process with a preliminary literature review. Some GTM purists might argue that doing a literature review before the data analysis is complete is not the “right way” to do grounded theory. However, Strauss (1987) emphasizes the need for continuous theoretical sensitivity for the researcher, that is, the researcher must always be alert to the theoretical implications when dealing with data, that is, whether collecting, analyzing, or writing, the researcher's attention to theoretical possibilities makes for a stronger theory overall. Further, as Urquhart and Fernández (2013) point out, researchers need to do an initial general

“non-committal” literature review to develop sensitivity to the theories in the field before they begin gathering and analyzing data. This preliminary literature review also helps the researchers better understand their research question, the larger field within which the question is asked, and the research method they wish to employ to answer their question (ibid.). Once I reached a point in my literature review where I felt that I had a reasonable understanding of social media, Canadian military, strategic communication, and grounded theory, I decided to begin the process of coding my collected tweets.

### ***Codes and Categories***

One of the initial struggles I had was in understanding what a code was and more importantly, whether I was doing coding “right.” Charmaz (2006, 186) defines coding as “the process of defining what the data are about.” Coding, then, was the process of reviewing a text and assigning a word or phrase to that text that captured what that text represented to me within the context of my research on information strategy, Canadian Armed Forces, social media, etc. In qualitative inquiry, Saldaña (2009, 3) defines a code as “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.” Thus, a code was essentially any word(s) that could capture what I thought the tweet was about.

The first step of open coding is where the researcher does not censor anything and codes each line of the text on its own merit (Urquhart 2013). As Charmaz (2006, 50) suggests, the aim of coding is for researchers to “remain open to what the material suggests and stay close to it” by keep the codes “short, simple, active and analytic.” In other words, the idea of coding is to go up one level of analysis by remaining close to the data but attempting to understand and



categorize it as well. Closeness to data is the most important feature of GTM, and something that I attempted to carry through each step of coding and categorizing, especially as I moved farther away from data and got closer to theory.

In going up a level of analysis, I found the preliminary sensitizing literature review was helpful with generating useful codes because it oriented me fairly well towards my chosen field of research, which led me to borrow some ideas and themes from the literature as codes. The code *Disaster Relief*, for instance, emerged directly from the literature that spoke to how military engagements are changing to include non-combat operations such as aid provision after natural or human-made disasters and search and rescue. Beyond that, however, there were “common sense” codes that popped up naturally. For instance, for tweets that mentioned the World Wars, I initially coded the tweets as WWI or WWII based on which of the two World Wars was mentioned. However, as I coded tweets for the Korean War, Canada’s past peacekeeping missions, and other past military engagements, the code HIST, short for history, came up as the best code for these tweets.

I coded each tweet manually to ensure that I was intimately familiar with the data as GTM demands (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Charmaz 2006). Building on the idea of line-by-line coding, I analyzed each tweet as an independent sentence (Charmaz 2006). This was a useful way to code the data because it allowed me to focus on each tweet as a single unit that I could code free from the influence of preceding or following tweets. Some of the codes came up immediately, but others required some thinking about what a particular tweet may be indicating in the larger scope of the account and what I knew about CAF, Twitter, social media, etc.

Coding each tweet individually did create challenges insofar as I was limited in how creatively I could interpret a sentence of 140 characters or less, especially if there was less

original text in the tweet because of a hyperlink taking up character space. Over time, I began to see patterns and relationships emerge among the codes, especially when debating whether one code might fit the tweet better than the other or whether a whole new code needed to be generated. Some codes even developed into categories. Categories, according to Charmaz (2006, 91), “explicate ideas, events, or processes in your data — and do so in telling words.” In other words, categories are the best descriptions of what is occurring in the data at a level of analysis one level higher than codes. Charmaz (2006) notes that by comparing data to data, data to codes, or codes to codes, researchers can uncover patterns that lead them to the next level in the analysis.

Internal comparisons among data and codes provide the evidence for codes to develop into categories or properties of categories. For example, if a code comes up in data from several sources, then that code might be a category, and the different contexts in which the code emerges might be the properties of that category. Similarities provide support for particular codes to rise further up the analytical ladder to the status of a category, and differences either lead to the emergence of new categories or provide the properties of categories (Charmaz 2006). As categories and their properties began to emerge from the codes, I could see how I was moving up a level of analysis and closer to theoretical thinking.

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967, 40), “As categories and properties emerge, develop in abstraction, and become related, their accumulating interrelations form an integrated central theoretical framework — the core of the emerging theory.” It is this orientation to an emerging core theory that guides the next step in coding that abstracts another level up from the open codes. As new open codes cease to emerge, that is, the categories of open codes seem to be saturated and particular themes begin to emerge among the open codes, then the selective

coding process begins. Selective coding is the stage when coding is limited to only the categories related to the core category (Urquhart 2013). These categories and their properties often emerge from the analysis that is part of memo writing. In deciding upon category names and category properties, researchers connect data to this next level of analysis by describing the decisions made about the categories and how the properties of categories link back to the data. The relationships of new and old codes with categories and the properties of these categories became much clearer in my analysis as coding progressed beyond the halfway mark.

### ***Memos***

Once a code was used multiple times, the variations in the text to which the code was applied created questions around what parts of the text could be fully described by the code and what parts required either another code or an expansion of the properties of the category that a code fit into. This is the point at which Glaser and Strauss (1967) have indicated that researchers should stop coding and record a memo of their thoughts about the code, its potential as a category or a property of a category, its relationship to other codes and categories, and the way it might contribute to the larger theory that might be beginning to emerge. I wrote a brief memo for each code I used and added to the memo as I saw “new” properties or relations among codes emerge (see Appendix A for the codebook). I also wrote memos about the theoretical implications of the information emerging from the coding process.

Data collection, coding, and analysis need to occur continually and as simultaneously as possible, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967, 43), because of the focus on theory generation and theory as process. In my case, the data collection took only one step and did not proceed simultaneously with coding and analysis. Coding and analysis, however, happened concurrently

because writing memos for each code forced me to clarify my thinking around what each code represented at that stage of the analysis. Making a note of any thinking around categories as thoughts emerge is essential to the theory generation process not only because the method demands it, but also because postponing writing down interesting thoughts can lead to important ideas being lost if the researcher cannot later recall the thought.

Memos are about more than just recording thoughts; memos are a space for the researcher to think about the data, the codes, the overall analysis, and the participants as well as how all these parts of the research process exist individually and in relation to one another (Saldaña 2009). Comparing old and new memos and how the researcher's thinking has evolved over time generates insights. Memo writing, therefore, is the process of exploring in a concrete way the researcher's own thought process around what codes are used and why, how these codes relate to others, what codes may be elevated to categories and why, whether there are codes that can be subsumed under other codes as their properties, what the bigger analytical framework emerging from the codes that have emerged so far is, and what kind of theory is germinating from the analysis so far. Writing memos about codes and why certain tweets needed separate codes or why two slightly different tweets could fit under the same code helped solidify my thinking around what CAF was communicating via Twitter.

According to Charmaz (2006, 45), coding “shapes an analytic frame from which you build the analysis,” and memos are where that frame and the analytic thinking behind it are recorded. Building on Saldaña's (2009) notion of memos as space for thinking, memo writing must be seen as a more active process of thinking through and building the analytical framework. Coding links raw data to the final theory because it is the first step the researcher takes towards understanding “what is happening in the data and ... what it means” (Charmaz

2006, 46). If data act as the foundation, then codes are the first layer of bricks laid on that foundation to build theory. Memos are where the analytical thought behind codes, categories, and relations among codes and categories are recorded and analyzed.

My initial memos were tweet-based, that is, each tweet that I found interesting merited a brief memo on why I thought that particular tweet was interesting, but this tweet memoing did not last long because as coding progressed, I began writing memos about codes and use the interesting tweets as examples of particular codes. Initial memoing of codes was also brief notes about what each code represented, including a simple recording of symbols. For instance, a tweet coded with H or HIST was a history-related tweet and a tweet coded with a question mark (?) was unclear because the text did not make sense either without the contextual information such as a picture, video, hyperlink, or another tweet to which the tweet being analyzed responded. As coding progressed, I occasionally had to make decisions about whether to code particular tweets under an existing code or add a new code. If I added a new code, then I wrote a memo for the new code, and if I used an existing code, then I would add a note to the code memo if a particularly interesting tweet was added under that code (see Appendix A for the codebook).

As codes began to coalesce into nebulous categories in my mind, I wrote memos to capture my thinking around the concepts that these codes evoked as well as to note whether particular codes might form new categories or properties of existing categories. For instance, I used the code ORG for tweets that shared information about the organization such as what the organization does; who makes up the organization — personnel, regiments, ships, squadrons; and what military events the organization celebrates — presenting of colours to a regiment, achieving regimental honours, etc. My reading of the ORG tweets was that these were tweets

that made the organization familiar to those on the outside, that is, these tweets were a way for the military to introduce itself or make itself known to the public. There were sub-codes of the ORG code such as O(EV) which was about organizational events or O(S) which was about organizational statements issued around particular events or issues. Writing memos about how these sub-codes fit under ORG helped me realize that ORG was actually a category and not just a code.

Another code NAME referred to tweets that contained the names of a unit, regiment, ship, etc. My reading of the NAME tweets was that by naming the parts of the organization that made up the whole, the tweets were informing the public about the role that various regiments, divisions, brigade groups, etc. played at various levels of the organization and in various operations and exercises at home and with our allies abroad. Within coding a few tweets with the ORG and NAME codes, I wrote a memo to define these two codes and differentiate them from each other; however, I realized that the NAME code was a property of the ORG code because the names of regiments, ships, squadrons refer back to the organization. The self-referential nature of the NAME tweets was a subset of the ORG tweets.

Recording what I learned throughout the process was useful as the research progressed because I could compare how my own thinking around particular concepts evolved from the initial starting point. As important as writing memos was, I think it was also important to actually go back and read those memos. Most GTM literature speaks of the importance of writing memos, and perhaps this goes without saying, but reading old memos is important too. For instance, over time, I continued to write memos about the various organization-related codes and categories, but it was reading the older memos that helped me realize that ORG was indeed a theme under which I could fit the other categories and codes. One of the activities that

helped with the relational analysis among codes and categories was sketching out the various codes and/or the main ideas about those codes recorded in memos and relating them to each other visually in diagrams (see sub-section: Drawing memos).

It was also useful to read older memos to see how the preliminary literature review and the coding and analysis phase led to particular insights that then guided the post-analysis literature review for the theoretical chapter. Memo writing about the themes and how the various literatures I reviewed fit together helped me see what literatures would be most promising with supporting the theory that emerged from the data. There are a lot of memos about existing literatures and my grounded theory analysis that did not make it into this dissertation. While these might come across as “wasted memos” because they do not appear in the dissertation, they are “useful memos” that prevented me from wasting too much time going further down research paths that might not have eventually fit the emerging theory.

The main strategy at use in GTM is a “general method of comparative analysis” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 1). Constant comparison among texts, codes, categories, and their properties is at the core of the method. In my coding and analysis, categories and their properties emerged and were refined through comparing patterns of codes used as well as memos analyzing what each code meant. Analyzing not only the tweets, but also the codes through the memos also helped refine my thinking around how codes were related to each other within the larger context of the organization (Urquhart 2007). Comparing codes in one of my memos, for instance, helped me realize that the code ORG was a potential category and the code EVENT was one of the properties of that category.

Because GTM does not attempt to establish either universality or proof, the constant comparison required by the method “requires only saturation of data—not consideration of all

available data, nor are the data restricted to one kind of clearly defined case” (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 104). What Glaser and Strauss (1967) referred to here was the point of theoretical saturation, a point in the analysis at which further analyzing the data does not generate new codes, categories, or properties of categories. While Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that the researcher should stop once theoretical saturation was reached, I found it difficult to predict whether new data would generate new codes or not. I analyzed all the tweets I had extracted to be sure that no new codes could emerge from the tweets. Further, because I analyzed tweets generated over a couple of years, I was also concerned about missing whether or how the tweets may have changed over time if I did not code all the available tweets.

### *Drawing Memos*

One of the means of memoing I used was drawing diagrams (Strauss 1987; Mills, Bonner, and Francis 2006). In very early stages, I drew various iterations and variations of *Figure 1* to define how I understood the state-government-military-public connection. Eventually, I decided to separate the government and the state because while the government represents the state, the state is more than just the government. This figure also appears in Chapter 1.



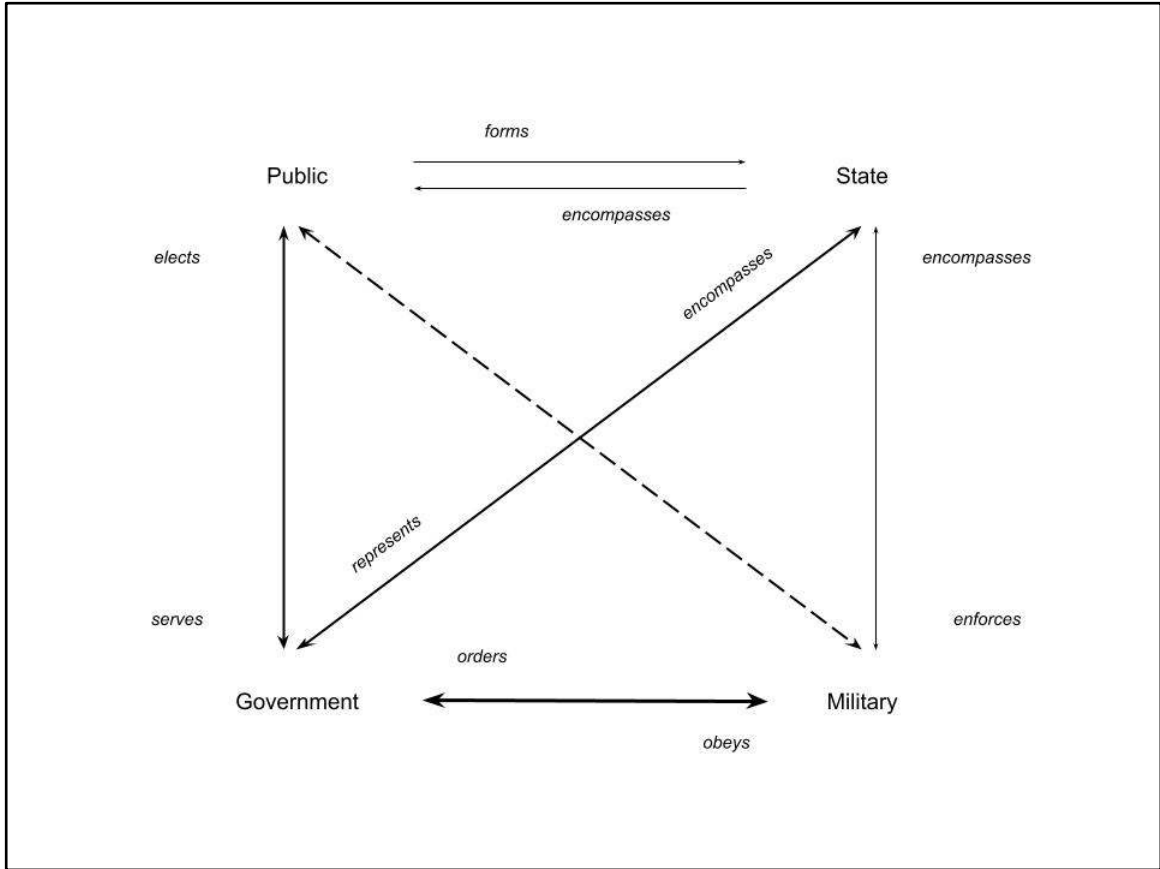


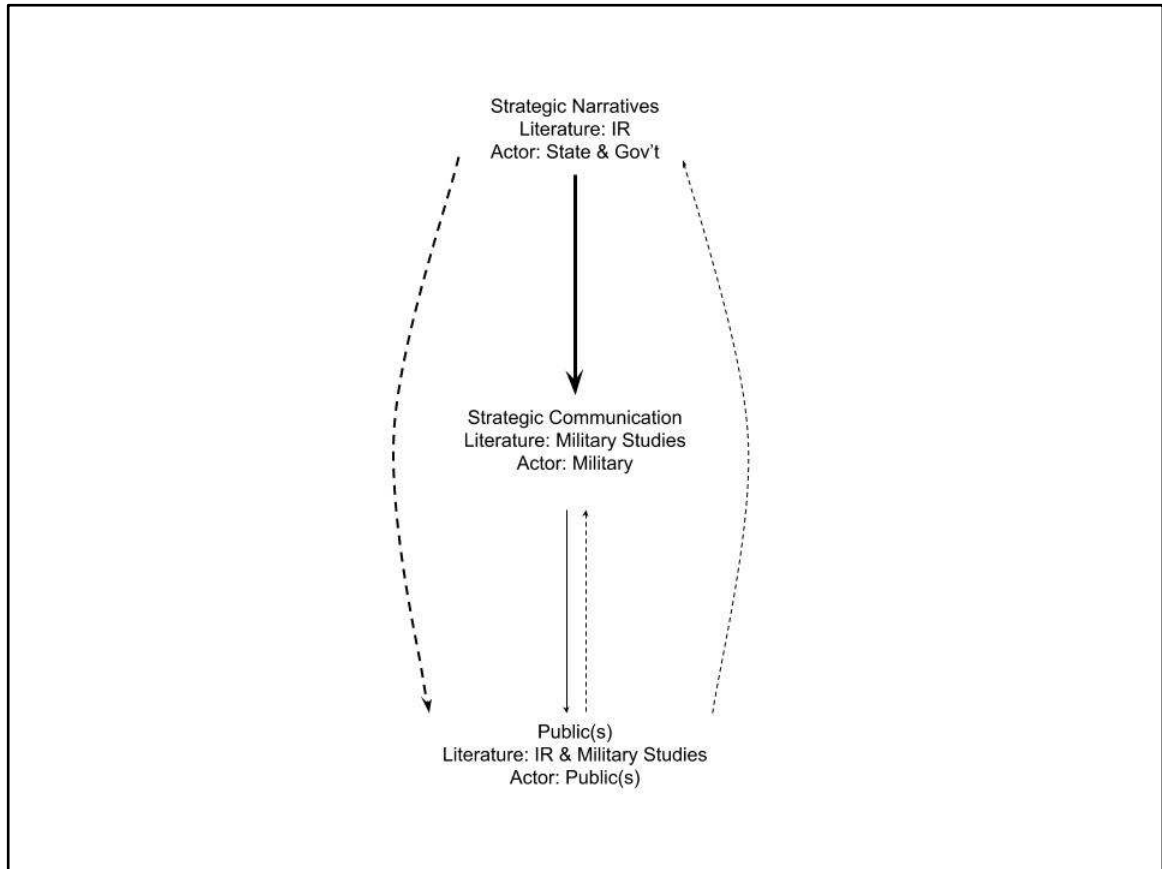
Figure 1: This is the memo I drew to understand the relationship between the state, the public, the government, and the military. This figure also appears in chapter 1 in the dissertation.

This thinking led me to see how what we “know” about the state as opposed to the government can be understood differently. Political parties bring their biases to governing, but the state represents more than those biases. For instance, Prime Minister Harper’s adversarial stance towards the US in the Arctic was surprising to many, particularly US actors, likely because of the existing strategic narrative of *Canada as a peacekeeping state* in the international system. In light of the strategic narrative shift towards “Canada First” and more robust assertions of Canadian Arctic sovereignty including commitment of military resources, however, the Prime Minister’s response was strategic communication to support the shift in the strategic narrative — the political bias of the governing party was shifting the strategic narrative

of the state through strategic communication (Byers 2006; Chase 2014; Dodds 2012; Lackenbauer 2010). Separating the state and the government diagrammatically helped me parse the distinction between the two.

Diagramming was particularly useful towards the later stages of data analysis, when I had the data classified and categorized under my four themes. Once I had around 10–15 codes and began to develop categories, it was useful to draw out the relationships between the codes to see if there was an emergent category there. As more categories emerged, the diagram drawing also helped me arrive at the four themes under which the various codes and categories could fit. The other thing that the diagramming revealed was the overlap among themes and categories or cases where one code could fit under two or more categories or themes. Seeing these overlaps helped in two ways: first, I was able to shift codes around to categories or themes where they might fit better, and second, I was able to see how the overlaps were not a coding or categorizing error due to redundancy but rather an expression of relationships within the data that could not and need not be separated.

Diagramming was also useful for seeing the connections between the literatures that I had reviewed throughout the research process (see *Figure 2*). Drawing out the relationships between the actors involved in strategic narrative and strategic communication helped me see, for instance, that the public was a target of both strategic narratives and strategic communication, but also that the military's strategic communication had a role in disseminating the strategic narratives to the public. Another realization was that the military exists within the strategic narrative, so it takes from and gives back to the strategic narrative through its strategic communication.



*Figure 2: This is the memo I drew to understand the relationship between strategic narratives and strategic communication across the International Relations and the Military Studies/Organizational Communication literatures, respectively. I have included state and government as one actor here, even though I separate them in Figure 1, because the state is the actor in IR and the government is the primary actor in CMR theory dictating what the military should do.*

Seeing how the organizational theme stood a little apart from the other three themes also drove the theoretical analysis forward. This sparked the idea to look more closely at strategic communication and strategic narratives literature. Though the tweets are almost entirely organization-centric, the themes that emerged showed some state-centricity as well. Charting out my theoretical hunches and then adding in the themes that emerged from the data helped me see the data-theory connection. Drawing memos was a useful technique to (re)view relationships among the memos I had already written about codes, literature, theoretical

hunches, etc. so that I could either write about them more clearly or even use some of the cleaned-up diagrams to represent my understanding in the dissertation.

### ***Biases***

As social beings, most human beings are unable to achieve a perfectly objective state when analyzing data. My analysis of the collected data also suffers from multiple biases. In this section, I acknowledge these biases in order that those influences be understood to be an unavoidable part of my data interpretation, which reduces the replicability of this research. Acknowledging the biases might allow some readers to “correct” for the biases in my interpretation. As Denzin and Lincoln (2005, 6) point out, the “personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity” of the researcher and the participants in the research interact and shape the research process. I did not have the opportunity to engage any participants directly, but as I have noted above, I come to this research with inherent biases of my own like any other researcher.

As Charmaz (2005, 509) also notes, “What observers see and hear depends upon their prior interpretive frames, biographies, and interests as well as the research context.” Some personal and other professional biases may have skewed the results, so I am acknowledging the biases I am aware of here in order that the reader may be aware of them and read my analysis and findings with these biases in mind. I am the child and grandchild of Indian Army officers, so I do hold a certain soft spot towards the armed forces as an institution and towards military personnel. Such a bias may have blunted my ability to read the data critically. I am not taking a critical theory-based approach to the question; however, a more critical eye might have been more revealing in the analysis of the data.

During the research process, I tried to remain aware that my own ideas of how the military should or could be using Twitter or other social media did not influence how I analyzed the tweets. I tried to ensure that I analyzed the tweets on their own terms instead of how I think the tweets could have been done better based on my literature review of academic and other works about effective communication on social media. As noted above, known and unknown biases may have slipped into my data analysis. My interpretation, therefore, is neither the “only” nor a “purely objective” one. Other researchers may arrive at different interpretations of the same data depending on choice of method and theoretical framework. Nonetheless, this dissertation provides a thorough analysis of CAF’s Twitter use based on iterative data analysis while moving up levels of abstraction towards a theory that explains how the military uses social media and what it tells us about the organization as well as its relationship with the government.

## Chapter 5: Data

Canadian Armed Forces have usually engaged in combat far away from home. The only exceptions of campaigns fought on Canadian soil and in Canadian waters since the wars between England and France in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries are the American invasion of 1775–6, the War of 1812, the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, and the struggle with German submarines along the east coast during the two World Wars. This freedom from invasion and armed civil strife has in some ways not only protected the Canadian public from the nature of war but also kept them unaware of the work that CAF does on their behalf. The awareness that does exist among the public is largely limited to politicians talking about national security, news media coverage of military news such as ongoing operations, or physical memorials and days of remembrance. In other words, strategic narratives form the basis of public knowledge of the military and support for the organization. Twitter and other social media sites allow CAF to share its daily work with Canadians, which helps with keeping the military in sight and in mind while also connecting the military clearly to the strategic narratives.

CAF tweets present an organizational identity of the Canadian military. What is tweeted and retweeted builds a particular image of CAF for those who read the tweets. It creates the image of an organization that is quintessentially Canadian with all the mentions of hockey games and Canadian football teams, but also an organization that is different because of the inherently distinct nature of military service and CAF's conscious perpetuation of historic traditions, particularly those of the British armed forces. The social media presence of the military then acts to create a relationship with its imagined public, particularly the Canadian

public, but it also acts to create an image of the Canadian military's culture and the ways that differentiate it from Canadian society.

Separation between society and military is not always ideal, and yet, if the military is to be engaged meaningfully in the society, it cannot be separated cleanly from political issues. The tweets that I have analyzed come from Huntington's school of thinking on civil-military relations. There are attempts by CAF to speak to the public on common interest issues such as the stigma around mental health or diversity; however, in the former case, there are no tweets about the paucity of resources available for the mentally ill in Canada, and in the latter case, the diversity of CAF is usually brought up when events such as Black History Month or International Women's Day are being celebrated with no comment on the challenges that these diverse groups face within CAF and in the broader Canadian society. CAF, thus, stays within the carefully prescribed bounds of the military's role and communicates with the public at the government's pleasure and to further its narratives.

### ***Twitter Account Management***

Based on policy documents such as the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat guidelines on social media use; the Defence Administrative Orders and Directives, particularly DAOD 2008-6; and the DND/CAF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media, as well as news media reports on other Government of Canada departments' use of social media, I can provide a hypothetical overview of how CAF Twitter accounts are most likely managed. The *DND/CF Guidelines for the External Use of Social Media* (Department of National Defence Canada 2011) encourage CAF units and personnel to use social media while also warning them of the

potential risks associated with social media use. The advice on social media conduct is this (ibid., 4):

1. Be Professional
2. Be Transparent
3. Be Inclusive
4. Be Respectful
5. Be Accountable
6. Do No Harm

This advice applies to both personnel and unit level use, so it is not a stretch to imagine that it also applies to the organizational level. The CAF Twitter accounts, thus, would be professional, transparent, inclusive, respectful, and accountable while attempting to do no harm.

CAF's Level 1 personnel were expected to develop a "Social Media Plan with input from their public affairs advisors" and submit it to the Director General of Marketing and Advertising at the office of the Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs) (Department of National Defence Canada 2011, 5). The plans provided details such as the need for the unit to utilize social media, target audience, approval processes, resource allocation, etc. along with the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with government policies and laws on accessibility, federal identity, information management, official languages, privacy, etc. The plans noted the rules of engagement for a variety of scenarios such as receiveing public queries or receiving political and/or profane posts. The planning of organizational responsiveness was necessary because of the speed at which social media messages can spread as well as the public's expectation for a quick response on social media. The plans also addressed how social media use would be evaluated for compliance as well as measured to gauge return on investment. These planning processes defined for the unit level are likely applied at the organizational level as well and followed through in the execution.



There are Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs) such as DAOD 2008-6 – Internet Publishing; Queen’s Regulations and Orders (QR&Os) such as QR&O 19.36 – Disclosure of Information or Opinion and QR&O 19.37 – Permission to Communicate Information; and Canadian Forces General messages such as CANFORGEN 136/06 CDS 050/06 011318Z SEP 06 – Guidance on Blogs and Other Internet Communications - CF Operations and Activities which apply to CAF personnel. The principles communicated within these directives and orders, however, are applicable to the organizational level of communication as well. For instance, the primacy of operational security is emphasized in all the guidelines for personnel’s social media use, so it is only expected that operational security will be top of mind for organizational social media accounts as well.

Under the Harper government, all government communication was tightly controlled by the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) through the use of Message Event Proposals, documents that departments submitted to the PMO in order for any communication during public events to be vetted (Smith 2016; The Canadian Press 2010). The Harper government invested heavily into public relations at DND/CAF, but many experienced media officers left the organization because of “micromanagement and political interference” from the PMO (Pugliese 2011). What can be inferred from the use of message event proposals and the exodus of DND/CAF public affairs personnel is that the Harper government exercised close control over the military’s messaging, including its social media posts. While the military has its own image to maintain as a professional organization, under the Harper government it was also promoting the partisan message of the party in power. Government control over messaging also explains the similarity between the government and the military’s messaging.

### ***Tone of the Tweets***

Most tweets take a reporting tone, that is, the tweets are generally informing the public about military activities, upcoming events, etc. In many of the tweets, there is little attempt to engage the public. The character space on Twitter limits what the tweet authors can say, but even so, there is room for a more engaging tone in more of the tweets. There are some tweets where CAF tweet authors take a more informal tone and come across as more conversational. A few tweets even manage to take on a more fun tone, particularly those that are about events such as Christmas and NORAD's Santa tracking program. The report style tweeting, I would argue, makes it easy for the military personnel communicating through these accounts to maintain a formal tone in their communication that follows the civil-military relations ideal of the separation of the military from politics. Taking a formal reporting tone means that the public affairs officers and/or other military personnel do not meander into politically sensitive territory by accident, upsetting the public's and the government's perceptions of complete civil control over the military in the process. A further difficulty in inviting exchanges through a more conversational tone would be the potentially enormous additional workload for public affairs personnel in responding, with the added danger that a dialogue might wander into the realm of government policy or political controversy.

### ***Style Choices in this Chapter***

I have chosen to use the term "the public" to indicate the recipients of tweets from the formal CAF accounts. I chose this term for two main reasons. First, it was a matter of avoiding awkward phrasing such as "Twitter followers that follow these CAF accounts" throughout the dissertation or using a term such as "audience," which might be more appropriate for

older/traditional media. Second, Twitter is a public space and the “target audience” — CAF’s imagined public(s) — for the tweets appear to be extremely broadly defined by virtue of the technology and the platform. It appears that CAF accounts are primarily targeting Canadians with their tweets, but even that narrowing of the term public is quite broad with respect to demographics. Further, the nature of Twitter is such that anyone can see the tweets because they exist in a public space. Thus, the term public encompasses all who may come across CAF tweets, whether they are Canadians or not and whether they follow CAF Twitter accounts themselves or not.

Where tweets are used to illustrate particular themes, codes, categories, and/or their properties, they are presented surrounded by a thin border along with the name of the posting CAF Twitter account, the tweet number, the date of the tweet, followed by the text.<sup>16</sup> Here is an example:

@CanadianArmy - 643814391587192833 - Tue Sep 15 15:51:27 2015 - #TributeTuesday  
Sept 18, 2006, 4 members of 2PPCLI were killed by a suicide bomber in Zhari district,  
#Afghanistan. <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CO9JxxRWUAA-0Av.jpg>

*This is a tweet about four personnel from the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry, who were killed by a suicide bomber during Canada’s mission in Afghanistan.*

This tweet was posted by the Canadian Army (@CanadianArmy). After the dash is the tweet number followed by the day, date, time, and year of the tweet. Finally, there is the text of the tweet. Outside of the border of the tweet, I provide a brief description and if needed, some

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<sup>16</sup> I have made some cosmetic corrections to the tweets presented below. Minor errors that occur when importing documents between platforms — from Twitter to a text-based program to Microsoft Excel and then to Microsoft Word — have been double-checked and corrected for clarity. For instance, the imported tweets represented the ampersand sign as “&amp;,” instead of just “&”, so in order to avoid confusion I have edited to add the correct form — & — in the tweets in this dissertation. The images accompanying the tweets have not been included in the dissertation adding them here would add unreviewed/unanalyzed data to the dissertation. Other than such minor corrections as described above, I have left the text of the tweets unchanged.

context for the tweet in italics. For instance, in the tweet description above, I describe the tweet while also providing the information that the personnel who were killed were from the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2PPCLI).

### *Themes*

While multiple codes and categories were generated through the coding process (see the codebook with all codes listed in Appendix A), the following four themes emerged as the most prominent in the analysis:

1. Organization
2. History
3. Preparedness
4. Partnership

The explanation of each theme follows, but I would like to note that there are numerous tweets in which these themes overlap. The history theme, for instance, is nearly, if not entirely, inseparable from the organization theme insofar as the history that is often recounted in the tweets is a history of the organization and works towards furthering the public's understanding of the organization. Similarly, because of the middle power status of Canada, which limits its ability to operate on its own on the international stage, most of CAF's training exercises take place in partnership with other states. Thus, the preparedness and partnership themes are closely entwined. As such, a tweet that I might be citing as an example of the history theme might appear to the reader to be an equal or better fit with the partnership and/or organization themes.

For the sake of clarity, I attempt to speak to only one theme at a time, even as I acknowledge that multiple themes may be present in a tweet.

### **Theme 1: Organization**

The organization theme emerges from tweets that inform the public about CAF and CAF personnel in a variety of ways. These tweets introduce and/or speak about the organization as a whole or the various parts of the organization to the public. They inform the public about the who, what, why, when, where, and how of the organization's activities and operations. There are tweets about current operations, upcoming events, everyday tasks, organizational events such as exercises, and statements from high-ranking members of CAF and the DND on various issues.

#### ***1.1 Who Makes Up CAF***

These tweets generally take the form of an introduction to individual personnel, units within CAF, and even the equipment CAF uses. Many of these tweets are accompanied by images, some contain videos, and many others provide external links, often to the DND/CAF website, for a more detailed story than what a tweet can provide. These tweets include statements from CAF or DND; stories and news about personnel or CAF operations and events; and actions/functions of the organization varying from everyday activities to more special and/or unusual tasks.

### 1.1.1 Personnel

Tweets about individual CAF personnel share stories about which part of Canada those individuals are from and what they do as part of CAF. These tweets allow a brief personal connection to form between those that view these tweets and those who are the subject of them. There are many tweets that provide an external link for details because of the character limit on Twitter. These external links often link to CAF or news media websites where the public can get more information about the personnel, organizational events, and/or operations. One of the more interesting external links to the CAF website links to stories from the field. These tweets provide a look into CAF personnel's first-person accounts of operations, training events, or daily life in the military. Occasionally, these stories are accompanied by audio, photos, and/or video on the CAF website (increasingly, these videos and photos are posted directly on Twitter). The location information acts to make the tweets visible to those who might search Twitter for location tags, for example, #BC for British Columbia or #TO for Toronto.

@RCN\_MRC - 459146303973253120 - Thu Apr 24 01:46:24 2014 - LS Matt Kessler is a #Saskatchewan native currently deployed on #HMCSRegina. Here's his story:  
<http://www.sasknewsnow.com/News/Regional/2014-04-14/article-3688839/Pangman-native-conducts-operations-at-sea-during-Op-Artemis/1>  
<http://pbs.twimg.com/media/Bl83IXyCYAAfKOB.jpg>

*This tweet links to the story of a Leading Seaman, who is from Saskatchewan, covered by a local paper in Saskatchewan.*

@CanadianArmy - 468467424409694208 - Mon May 19 19:05:12 2014 - The largest field kitchen ever built for a Canadian Army exercise. Ex #MapleResolve @CanadianForces  
<http://bit.ly/T2TREh...>

*This tweet shares a story about how CAF needed to build a massive field kitchen to feed over 3,000 troops that were coming together to train for Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE.*

These stories make the organization and its personnel more accessible by sharing the everyday life of people in the military. By finding similarities with their own lives people can see how CAF personnel and organization are part of the larger Canadian society at the level of the everyday. Differences are obvious as well, and they highlight how life in CAF is divergent from civilian life. These tweets make CAF's strategic communication more relatable.

### *1.1.2 Diversity*

Diversity is usually tweeted about from a perspective of gender, race, ethnicity, etc. Tweets that acknowledge diversity explicitly are primarily shared during international celebrations such as Black History Month, International Women's Day, or Asian Heritage Month; or during domestic celebrations such as Canada's National Aboriginal History Month. In these tweets, the diversity of the organization is not only acknowledged, but also celebrated by the sharing of the achievements of these diverse groups within CAF. The organization's communication of diversity aligns with the Canadian strategic narrative of multiculturalism.

@CanadianForces - 562370919327625217 - Mon Feb 02 22:04:10 2015 - RT  
@Army\_Comd: The #BlackHistoryMonth is an opportunity to honour those who served this country from the beginning #StrongProudReady [http://...](#)

@CanadianArmy - 565534692301352961 - Wed Feb 11 15:35:52 2015 - "Army" Howard; WWI vet & Canada's first black Olympian. Read his story: <http://bit.ly/1uBtqa2>  
#BlackHistoryMonth [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B9kuzj\\_CcAA\\_Z48.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B9kuzj_CcAA_Z48.jpg)

*These tweets are about Black History Month and Black Canadians who served in CAF.*

@CanadianArmy - 310038894517293056 - Fri Mar 08 14:46:47 2013 - Women in the Canadian military - we salute you! <http://goo.gl/81JA5> #internationalwomensday #army #cdnarmy @cfoptions @canadianforces

*This tweet, sent out on International Women's Day, is about women's contribution to CAF.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 598192110232346625 - Tue May 12 18:24:47 2015 - RT  
@CanadianForces: #TributeTuesday to Quan Jil Louie, @RCAF\_ARC Flying Officer  
<http://ow.ly/MRFT1> #AsianHeritageMonth <http://t.co/5StW...>

*This tweet pays tribute to a CAF member of Asian descent during Asian heritage month.*

The other time that diversity is occasionally brought up is when there is a tweet about job opportunities in CAF; however, these tweets about jobs were usually tweeted by @ForcesJobs,<sup>17</sup> CAF's official recruitment account on Twitter, and then retweeted by one of the CAF accounts I chose to analyze, as "RT @ForcesJobs" in the following tweets indicates.

@RCAF\_ARC - 562406444461330433 - Tue Feb 03 00:25:20 2015 - RT @ForcesJobs:  
Black Canadians have a proud history of service with the #Forces #BlackHistoryMonth  
<http://ow.ly/Id4vy> <http://t.co/nQIq...>

*This is a retweet of a @ForcesJobs tweet about the history of Black people serving with CAF.*

@RCN\_MRC - 523208380098543616 - Fri Oct 17 20:26:13 2014 - RT @ForcesJobs:  
#FactFriday Every #occupation in the Forces is open to women. #diversity, #careers #FAQ  
Have questions? <http://t.co/DRAo...>

*This is a retweet of a @ForcesJobs tweet about women being welcome in each occupation in CAF, an option that most other militaries around the world do not provide.*

CAF also tweets about the women who have been a part of CAF historically, particularly during World War II, as well as current personnel who are women.

@CanadianArmy - 658433564824829952 - Mon Oct 26 00:02:49 2015 -  
#SundayNightFlick From 2008, interview w/ Gladys Power, last known surviving female  
#FWW veteran #womenhistory <https://amp.twimg.com/v/a9cf6876-02d8-4279-b418-d3d9dedf914a>

*This is a tweet about a woman who served with CAF as early as the First World War.*

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<sup>17</sup> The @ForcesJobs Twitter account has now been subsumed under the @CanadianForces Twitter account



Compared to most other world militaries, CAF has been a pioneer with respect to integrating women in a variety of roles within the military. While much of the trailblazing on gender happened due to external pressures, CAF is still the first on reaching many milestones related to the inclusion of women in the military. From vehicle technicians to combat divers, and from intelligence officers to combat generals, CAF has no service barriers for women.

@CanadianArmy - 310126525984952320 - Fri Mar 08 20:35:00 2013 - RT  
@CFOperations: The @CanadianForces is one of the only militaries in the world that allows women to work any job <http://t.co/ZM95VDIHu> ...

*This tweet informs the public how all careers in CAF are open to women, that is, there are no gender barriers for women.*

However, the positive work that CAF has done to integrate women has also encountered some failure. The most prominently tweeted about issue in my dataset is the issue of sexual harassment experienced by CAF personnel, a majority of whom are women. My tweet dataset captured the release of the Report of the External Review Authority on Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in CAF in early 2015. Further, when the change of command from General Tom Lawson to Lieutenant-General Jonathan Vance took place in mid-2015, the incoming Chief of Defence Staff was explicit about his desire to tackle the problem of sexual misconduct in CAF. This led to some traditional news media coverage, but there were limited tweets about the issue. The event where the report was released was live tweeted by CAF, sharing the findings of the inquiry as well as statements by some of the top-ranking personnel. These tweets align well with Canada's narrative of being a progressive state.

@CanadianForces - 593819931340316672 - Thu Apr 30 16:51:18 2015 - We will be live-tweeting during the Release of the External Review Authority Report on Sexual Misconduct in the #CAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CD2sFLLXIAAkLNb.jpg>

*This tweet shares that CAF will be live tweeting the release of the report on Sexual Misconduct in CAF.*

@CanadianForces - 593822600402440192 - Thu Apr 30 17:01:55 2015 - Sexual misconduct counter to our military ethos & the national values that the #CAF exists to uphold and to defend – CDS Lawson

*This tweet shares the Chief of Defence Staff, General Tom Lawson's statement regarding the report on Sexual Misconduct in CAF.*

@CanadianForces - 593824810679033857 - Thu Apr 30 17:10:42 2015 - I am committed to leading this change as part of the Command Team – CWO West

*This tweet shares the Chief Warrant Officer Kevin West's statement regarding the report on Sexual Misconduct in CAF.*

Women come up in one other way for CAF. Along with tweets about serving female CAF personnel, CAF also tweets about women who have been supporting CAF as civilians, often writing letters to personnel or helping organize the war effort at home. These tweets highlight how civilians can help the military, tying the military's work directly to Canadians.

@CanadianForces - 556189794880196609 - Fri Jan 16 20:42:35 2015 - Gladys Osmond who wrote hundreds of thousands of handwritten letters to deployed #CAF troops has passed away #RIPGladys

*This tweet pays tribute to Gladys Osmond, a Newfoundlander who wrote to CAF troops posted across the world.*

@CanadianArmy - 535520645942349824 - Thu Nov 20 19:50:46 2014 - RT @TheCurrentCBC: Meet Veronica Foster, the face of Canada's war effort during #WW2: <http://bit.ly/1yusRfD> SH #RonnietheBrenGunGirl [http...](http://)

*This tweet is about Veronica Foster, the woman whose photo assembling a Bren machine gun came to represent the work at home contributing to the war effort. Her image was similar to the US military's Rosie the Riveter poster. However, Rosie, unlike Ronnie the Bren gun girl, was fictional.*

Little is said on the LGBTQ+ support that CAF has provided to their personnel. There are a few tweets about Pride parades, but other than that there has not been much shared on

these accounts. On the other hand, CAF has only recently begun to acknowledge how poorly LGBTQ+ personnel were treated before the ban on serving was lifted. In acknowledging the rights of gay and lesbian people to serve in the Canadian military, CAF was ahead of its time and government (see, for instance, Belkin and McNichol 2001). CAF may even have helped pave the way for the rest of Canadian society to accept the LGBTQ+ community.

@CanadianArmy - 344454041255940096 - Tue Jun 11 14:00:17 2013 - RT @LFWAPAO: #Video: CFB Pride Flag <http://globalnews.ca/video/625016/cfb-pride-flag> #EdmPride #PrideWeek #Pride #Flag #YEG

*This is a tweet about Canadian Forces Base Edmonton (CFB Edmonton) raising the rainbow flag during Pride week. The hashtags mention Edmonton (airport code YEG) as well as Pride.*

There are overlaps between the gender, racial, and ethnic aspects of diversity, of course, because people of a variety of races, genders, and ethnicities serve in CAF, and certainly, there are other tweets where CAF's racial diversity is implicit.

@CanadianArmy - 426822814545350657 - Fri Jan 24 21:04:23 2014 - Pte Leung stands at attention during his Infantry Qualification parade practice in Wainwright, AB. #strongproudready <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/BexhFqOCEAAykTl.jpg>

*This is a tweet about a qualification parade, and the photo of Private Leung identifies him as someone of potentially Asian descent; however, the tweet itself does not tag for diversity or Asian heritage.*

Tweets that, like the one above, do not point out diversity explicitly might abound. Many tweets that mention various events or even contain images of CAF personnel training or participating in operations may have diverse personnel involved, but it is difficult to tell without images or sometimes even with the images if there is camouflage paint involved. Perhaps emphasizing the “diversity” of a CAF member from the demographic perspective of race, ethnicity, and/or gender might work to create a sense of difference instead of unity among the

personnel. So, the celebration of diversity might be best restricted to days, months, and events that celebrate different ethnic and/or gender groups, and when a member accomplishes something diversity related.

@RCN\_MRC - 609063063615098881 - Thu Jun 11 18:22:04 2015 - RT @UAlberta: Royal Canadian Navy's first female rear-admiral receives honorary degree. <http://ow.ly/O8ho0> #UAlberta15 <http://t.co/Dfh4...>

*This retweet celebrates Rear Admiral Jennifer Bennett receiving an honorary degree. Rear Admiral Bennett was also the RCN's first female Rear Admiral.*

The issue of diversity is sometimes raised by the public, either tweeting at or directly messaging CAF accounts. The response tweets then address diversity in answering individual questions.

@RCN\_MRC - 530796318185508864 - Fri Nov 07 18:57:58 2014 - @aaloomey Thank you for your question. The Canadian Armed Forces now allow both Sikh men and women to wear turbans while serving.

*@aaloomey had originally tweeted the following question for the RCN: "@RCN\_MRC has there recently been a Royal Canadian Navy turban accommodation policy change for Sikh women?"*

CAF mentions demographic diversity on Twitter largely on special days and/or events such as mentioning female CAF personnel on International Women's Day or mentioning Aboriginal personnel on Canada's National Aboriginal History Month and Black personnel during Black History Month. While this demographic approach to diversity is largely in line with the rest of Canadian government, it can become too simplistic over time. Pointing to a Black person or a woman as an example of diversity can appear reductive not only for the persons being pointed out but also those being addressed because this diversity appears too much like tokenism.

### 1.1.3 Loss of life

Loss of life tweets, sometimes tagged with #TributeTuesday, highlight the ultimate cost of war and other military engagements for CAF personnel. They also take away some of the naiveté about what the military does when it goes overseas. Many of these tweets refer to losses in one of the World Wars or the Korean War, but some are more recent such as tweets that refer to the loss of CAF personnel in Afghanistan.

@CanadianArmy - 562657088049283072 - Tue Feb 03 17:01:18 2015 - #TributeTuesday  
Cpl Dyer was one of the first Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, April 2002  
#RememberThem [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B871o9ICQAAJFY\\_.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B871o9ICQAAJFY_.jpg)

*This a tweet about Corporal Ainsworth Dyer who was one of the first soldiers killed in Afghanistan.*

@RCN\_MRC - 360387835729162244 - Thu Jul 25 13:15:30 2013 - #HRM park to be  
named in honour of Petty Officer 2nd Class Craig Blake, killed in #Afghanistan in 2010  
<http://thech.ca/11fT7fz>

*This tweet is about the renaming of a local park in memory of Petty Officer 2nd Class Craig Blake who died in action in Afghanistan.*

@CanadianForces - 598544411224580096 - Wed May 13 17:44:42 2015 - Eight Canadian  
First World War soldiers buried in France with military honours <http://ow.ly/MUx3M>  
#RememberThem [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CE50-GOXIAAUOP\\_.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CE50-GOXIAAUOP_.jpg)

*The tweet is about how the bodies of eight soldiers who fought in World War I were found in France. They were buried with full military honours in 2015.*

As the number of lives lost increases, the mission may come under scrutiny for effectiveness and impact. Luttwak (1995) argued that current combat evaluation fails to calculate the impact of casualties on the mission. Loss of lives can become a politically charged matter that can lead the government to order a withdrawal from operations. Feaver and Gelpi (2004) argued that public opinion is more sensitive to loss of lives when the mission is not

going well compared to when it is; however, Boucher (2010) found that while many Canadians remained tolerant of casualties, the increasing number of Canadian casualties affected the Canadian public's perception of the Afghanistan mission over time. The sharing of tweets about the loss of lives of Canadian soldiers would appear to be counterproductive to the military being able to continue their work on a mission.

The loss of lives tweets can also, however, bolster the warrior strategic narrative because warriors fight, but they also die. These tweets are part of the larger strategic communication plan and the strategic narrative of the positive impact CAF and Canada are having on the world. The fallen soldiers' contributions to the success of the mission they were part of also makes a case for continuing the mission rather than ending it. There are also several tweets about the repatriation ceremonies of soldiers, and that brings up the cultural phenomenon that is the *Highway of Heroes*, the part of Ontario's Highway 401 that is part of fallen soldiers and their families' path from Canadian Forces Base Trenton to Toronto. CAF accounts tweet information about the repatriation of fallen soldiers:

@CanadianArmy - 575369107115241473 - Tue Mar 10 18:54:19 2015 - Our fallen comrade, Sgt Doiron, returns home to Canada later today. #TributeTuesday #RememberThem [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B\\_wfJiYUwAAdu7W.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B_wfJiYUwAAdu7W.jpg)

*This tweet utilizes the #TributeTuesday hashtag in memory of a recently fallen soldier as well as the #RememberThem hashtag to connect the loss of his life to other soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice before him.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 575434508490551296 - Tue Mar 10 23:14:12 2015 - Sgt Doiron departed Trenton today on the Highway of Heroes for Toronto following a repatriation ceremony [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B\\_xaoL5VEAATEho.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B_xaoL5VEAATEho.jpg)

*This tweet works as an advisory or an announcement about the repatriation ceremony.*

@CanadianForces - 575348152053686273 - Tue Mar 10 17:31:03 2015 - RT @OPP\_GTATraffic: Repatriation of Sgt. Andrew Doiron - the route will be on Hwy 401

to the new coroners building at Hwy401 and Keele St ...

*This is a retweet by CAF of the Ontario Provincial Police's Greater Toronto Area Traffic tweet about the route that the repatriation vehicles will take. Such tweets are public service announcements regarding expected delays for those who may be planning to take the same route.*

Tweets about the loss of life are grave in tone and emphasize the dangerous nature of the military's work. They bring attention to defence policy, foreign policy, and other government decision-making around military operations as well as other issues such as the quality and age of equipment. They can help provide moments of sober thought and reflection on the strategic aims of the government and the interests of state in light of the loss of life that executing the government's strategy might require.

#### *1.1.4 Tough Life*

Beyond the threat of death and injury that is a part of military personnel's lives, there is also the matter of everyday challenges that they experience. There are some tweets that highlight the difficulties that CAF personnel face in the execution of their duties. Often these tweets come in the form of mentions of operating conditions such as extreme weather.

@CanadianArmy - 570585731476918272 - Wed Feb 25 14:06:54 2015 - Canadian & US soldiers performed in austere winter conditions during exercise #ARCTICBISON on Lake Winnipeg. <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-sgsaTUIAELc7b.jpg>

*This tweet is accompanied by images that portray the harsh conditions in which the training is taking place.*

@CanadianArmy - 556499276462059520 - Sat Jan 17 17:12:21 2015 - -25 ° at noon. Our French Army allies are getting a true Canadian experience during exercise #RafaleBlanche2015. <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B7kVJJXCQAATgZT.png>

*This tweet takes on a lighter note by stating that the extreme cold means an authentic Canadian experience for the French allies.*

However, there are some cases where soldiers end up losing their lives in friendly fire or during training, emphasizing, perhaps unintentionally, how excruciating the demands of the job or simply training for the job can be.

@CanadianForces - 574275476635648000 - Sat Mar 07 18:28:37 2015 - Iraqi Kurdish forces mistakenly fired on members of Canada's Special Operations Forces. #OpIMPACT  
@CanadianForces - 574276003083722752 - Sat Mar 07 18:30:43 2015 - Killed in action was Sgt Andrew Joseph Doiron, from the Canadian Special Operations Regiment, based at Garrison Petawawa. #OpIMPACT

*These two successive tweets are about the death of Sgt. Doiron in a friendly fire incident, where an allied group mistook CAF personnel for enemy combatants.*

@CanadianArmy - 626150892098727937 - Tue Jul 28 22:03:00 2015 - Halfway through basic infantry training at CFB Shilo, Pte Kirby Tott, 25, died suddenly on July 25, 2015. Full story: <http://ow.ly/QcqBT>

*This is a tweet about a soldier passing away during training.*

While such tweets could be part of the loss of life aspect of CAF's work, the difficult conditions that CAF personnel train and perform under as well as the sustained mental and physical strength expected of them in these conditions is also an indicator of the difficulties of everyday military life. Such difficulties separate the military from most other professions, while also reinforcing the warrior narrative where extraordinary sacrifices might be expected of military personnel.

## ***1.2 What Does CAF Do***

Many of the tweets on CAF Twitter accounts are about what CAF does. They are about the everyday tasks that CAF engages in at both an organizational as well as personnel level. The most common activity CAF participates in is training. The next most common thing that CAF does is to respond to threats to the Canadian state or any partners of the state. Peacekeeping is



the next operation that on CAF's agenda, usually at the behest of the UN. Then, there are non-combat operations such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and search and rescue that do not quite fit into either the war or the peacekeeping categories. CAF, particularly the RCN, is also part of operations to prevent illegal trafficking. Finally, CAF also engages in activities with the community such as runs and walks to raise funds, gifts delivery to sick children during Christmas, etc.

### *1.2.1 Training*

One of the most common activities that the military engages in is preparation for a variety of operations that it may be expected to execute, sometimes at very short notice. Further discussion on the training category is in the analysis of Theme 3: Preparedness.

### *1.2.2 War and Combat Operations*

Tweets about war and combat operations are the most common tweets along with the training related tweets. The information shared may be about combat operations, such as Operation IMPACT, CAF's contribution to the coalition fighting Daesh (ISIS/ISIL) in Iraq, or it may take the form of information about the battles that CAF fought in the past during the World Wars or in Korea such as the Battles of Passchendaele, Vimy Ridge, and Kapyong. There is significant overlap with the History theme here because of the importance of the two World Wars in shaping the organizational identity of CAF as well as the military standing of Canada on the world stage.

There are also intersections with the Partnership theme because Canada, as a middle power acts in concert with other allies. Any combat operations that CAF is a part of are

multistate alliances, usually with NATO allies. The intersections with the Preparedness theme also emerge because most of the training that CAF personnel are shown to be engaging in on Twitter is for combat operations. There is some search and rescue (SAR) or avalanche prevention training that would fall under the non-combat operations category and some peacekeeping/peacebuilding training; however, the training is largely directed at improving warfighting skills and interoperability between Canada and its partners.

@RCAF\_ARC - 580789862967705600 - Wed Mar 25 17:54:28 2015 - #Infographic on effects of #RCAF airstrikes by @CanadianForces on #ISIL between 02.11.14 and 03.23.15. #24\_7Global <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CA9hTX9WQAEQ4wu.jpg>

*This is a tweet sharing information in graphic format about RCAF's contribution to the multinational operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.*

@CanadianForces - 664082119463956480 - Tue Nov 10 14:08:09 2015 - 40 000+ CAF members served in our country's efforts in Afghanistan; 158 died <http://ow.ly/UrLLT> #RememberThem <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CTdLKvgXIAA5bnZ.jpg>

*This is a tweet about the thousands of CAF personnel that served as part of Canada's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and the 158 who died. The tweet is one of a series of tweets that carry the hashtag #RememberThem as part of Remembrance Day events before and on November 11 annually.*

@CanadianArmy - 256792457730220032 - Fri Oct 12 16:24:27 2012 - Capt Simon Mailloux, 1st CF amputee to return to active duty in #Afghanistan, receives a CinC Unit Commendation. BZ! <http://ow.ly/eqMbO>

*This is a tweet about Captain Simon Mailloux, who lost a leg during an IED incident in Afghanistan. He returned to Afghanistan on active duty, the first CAF member to do so as an amputee. The letters BZ are read as Bravo Zulu in the phonetic alphabet. In military speak, Bravo Zulu is the way to say, "Well Done!"*

@RCN\_MRC - 529746362016215040 - Tue Nov 04 21:25:49 2014 - RT @CFOperations: #HMCS #TORONTO technicians work tirelessly ensuring serviceability of combat systems on #OpREASSURANCE with #NATO <http://ow.ly/i/7rJcI>

*This is a retweet about RCN personnel working on Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Toronto to keep the combat systems in order while the ship is deployed on Operation REASSURANCE as part of NATO's assurance and deterrence measures in Central and Eastern Europe.*

As the tweets above reflect, there are few, if any, state-on-state wars in which the Canadian military engages. Even the combat operations in Afghanistan were not a war against Afghanistan; rather, the operations dealt with the domestic insurgency as well as the influence of violent non-state actors like the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The military faces opponents who use not only the physical weapons at hand but also their knowledge of various information and communication technologies including social media to gain supporters and followers, some of whom also join these insurgents in combat zones to fight for the insurgent cause.

One of the issues that CAF encounters in continuing its combat operations is getting recruits. The military, therefore, encourages more Canadians to enlist in CAF via social media, particularly by foregrounding the adventurous nature of military work. These can be read in contrast to the loss of life tweets insofar as they emphasize the “lighter” or more “fun” side of being in the military.

@CanadianForces - 547393506336325632 - Tue Dec 23 14:09:16 2014 - RT @ForcesJobs: Take flight with the Forces and experience adventure in the @RCAF\_ARC <http://ow.ly/F8Yli> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B5eqSrEicAAJU7T.jpg>

*This is a retweet from the @ForcesJobs Twitter account encouraging Canadians to join CAF to “experience adventure” in the RCAF.*

@CanadianArmy - 304668489472421889 - Thu Feb 21 19:06:43 2013 - RT @CanadianForces: Take a look at the Aboriginal programs available in the #CanadianForces #CFjobs <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/aboriginalprograms-93>

*This is a retweet about the Aboriginal programs that CAF offers as a way to encourage more First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples to enlist.*

@RCN\_MRC - 568259119481786369 - Thu Feb 19 04:01:46 2015 - RT @RCNCPO:  
#RCN\_MRC 49/365 Where does your job take you? @Canada your navy home and abroad  
@RCN\_MRC <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-Hz2-CCQAAk2-S.jpg>

*This is a retweet about where working with the RCN can take a person, accompanied with an image of a couple of divers working on a ship's propeller. The implication being that working with CAF can lead to doing interesting things, not all of which are related to combat and war operations.*

Returning to the idea of war and combat operations, most of the wars that the Canadian military engaged in and now tweets about are part of history. As the tweets below show, the war tweets are usually referring to the World Wars or the Korean War. This might be in order to support the strategic narrative where the Afghan mission was framed more as stability operations for statebuilding.

@RCAF\_ARC - 596717036644003843 - Fri May 08 16:43:22 2015 - Among Canada's  
"Few": The #RCAF's No. 1 Squadron in the Battle of Britain: Story: <http://bit.ly/1IoMlsN>  
#RCAFBoB75 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CEf2-3RUUAAom5E.jpg>

*This is a tweet that links to story about the RCAF's No. 1 Squadron that participated in the Battle of Britain on the 75th anniversary of the battle, which was a major air campaign fought amongst the World War II belligerents.*

@RCN\_MRC - 594696717133619200 - Sun May 03 02:55:20 2015 - RT @RCN\_MRC:  
Tomorrow we commemorate the 70th anniversary of #BattleofAtlantic across Canada.  
National ceremony is at the War Memorial in #Ottawa at 1030

*This is a tweet about the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic, which was the longest fought battle between the Allied and Axis powers during World War II. The RCN was a key actor in the battle.*

@CanadianArmy - 590894502417666049 - Wed Apr 22 15:06:42 2015 - April 22, 1915:  
Cdn troops fight Germans during 2nd Battle of #Ypres, suffer 1st exposure to gas warfare.  
#Ypres100 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CDNHayYUgAENjQm.png>

*This is a tweet about the Battle of Ypres during which CAF personnel were exposed to gas warfare.*

War and combat operations are, of course, the *raison d'être* of any military. As such combat operations, past and present, are more frequently mentioned in the CAF Twitter feeds (I discuss past wars and operations in the History theme). Such tweets create a sense of Canada as an active contributor to international security, and CAF as an organization that is constantly working to bring to bear the weight of Canada as an international security actor. All of which reinforces the Canada as a warrior nation narrative.

Further, the military prepares and plans for war and combat operations a lot more than it actually engages in them. The training is to ensure that if the time comes for the military to defend Canada or to assist its allies, then CAF is ready. Preparedness is, therefore, a separate theme that emerges from the tweets because of the number of tweets that mention CAF working with domestic and international partners to prepare and train for war and/or combat operations (see further discussion on training in the Preparedness theme). Because the *raison d'être* of the military is war and combat and because there remain limited opportunities for the military to engage in actual combat, then it must do so by engaging in training. Therefore, the number of tweets related to earlier and more recent wars and combat as well as training operations are the most numerous.

While I subsume war under what the military does and create a separate theme of preparedness, these tweets easily outnumber all other tweets about peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, etc. put together. This makes sense insofar as the “real job” of the military is fighting or preparing to fight to defend the sovereignty of its state or of its allies. Thus, the brevity of these sections is not an indicator of the actual number of these kinds of tweets and their potential impact on the organization in building and projecting an organizational identity that the public sees.

Inasmuch as it was part of the Harper government's plan to create a narrative of a warrior nation that has benefitted from the patriotic leanings of the Conservatives, the warrior identity is something with which many CAF personnel would identify. The public would also be hard pressed to not see the military as an organization based on a warrior ethos. How that idea of "warrior ethos" is defined will vary based on social and cultural imaginings, demographics, political ideologies, etc. of the individual citizen as well as the community of which that individual is a part. The Canadian idea of the warrior ethos is separate from the US, but the ideas of the Alberta public will also differ from those of the Québec public, and what people in rural Ontario think will differ from what people in Toronto think. This means that even as the military attempts to create a particular identity, it will always be performing and perfecting that identity for a broad imagined public and its interpretation of "Canadian values."

A generation ago, some Canadians might have called CAF a force for peacekeeping, but for those growing up with the Afghan war and the engagement in Iraq, CAF has a very different role in society, a more combat-oriented warrior role. This might change with the Trudeau government's commitment to contribute troops to UN peacekeeping operations. CAF's imagined public receives these tweets and other social media posts in light of the changing geopolitical reality of Canada and its allies. Combined with the large number of tweets about combat operations or preparing for combat operations means that many Canadians might see war fighting, instead of peacekeeping and humanitarian aid provision, as CAF's primary purpose indicating a shift to the warrior narrative from the peacekeeping strategic narrative.

### 1.2.3 Trafficking Prevention

While these operations might be better classified as crime prevention, they can be considered a subset of war and combat operations because sometimes the proceeds from the trafficking of illegal goods fund the activities of belligerent states or violent non-state actors. CAF, particularly the RCN, are part of operations to prevent trafficking such as Operation CARIBBE, an anti-trafficking multinational joint operation. These tweets also highlight the work that they do, in partnership with allies, to actively prevent conflict from occurring.

@RCN\_MRC - 396799988870574080 - Sun Nov 03 00:44:24 2013 - #HMCSEdmonton & CP-140 Aurora, aid USCG to seize more than 1.1 tons of cocaine  
<http://news.ca.msn.com/top-stories/canadian-military-helps-us-seize-11-tonnes-of-cocaine-1#scpshrjwfb> #OpCaribbe

*This is a tweet about the RCN assisting the US Coast Guard with capturing a over a ton of cocaine.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 570274089576869889 - Tue Feb 24 17:28:32 2015 - RT  
@southcomwatch: @USNavy & @RCAF\_ARC aircraft, @USGC Cutter Bertholf interdict smuggling boat, seize \$17M of cocaine in E. Pacific <http://...>

*This an RCAF retweet about an operation where they assisted the US Navy with capturing \$17 million worth of cocaine.*

@CanadianForces - 654000697202053120 - Tue Oct 13 18:28:11 2015 - RT  
@CanEmbFrance: Proof of the Franco-Can. military coop.'s efficiency: 800 kgs of cocaine were just seized <http://ow.ly/TaSVG> <http://t...>

*This a retweet about CAF working with the French military to capture 800 kilograms of cocaine.*

While these tweets are primarily about the seizure of drugs and preventing the money from these drugs reaching violent actors that could create difficulties for the military at a later time, there is also a sense of service to society. Usually, issues such as drugs and other illegal

trafficking are tackled at the domestic level. Through their trafficking prevention operations, however, CAF helps ease the burden of local police forces as well as other domestic security services. The work that CAF does with partners also affects the domestic and national police and security organizations such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Drug Enforcement Administration in the US. These prevention operations work towards reinforcing the strategic narrative that Canada stands as an active partner to domestic security organizations such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other countries in tackling common issues of concern. Further, working with the armed forces of other countries during these operations helps build rapport among the personnel that could be useful should they need to work together again.

#### *1.2.4 Peacekeeping*

Canadians grant a higher moral ground to peacekeeping than combat operations most likely because while combat is seen as fighting for one's own country and/or interests, peacekeeping is helping others. Peacekeeping is considered to be altruistic, even though it can benefit the state (Dorn 2005). Peacekeeping usually also has fewer chances of combat casualties and appears to require fewer resources than combat operations.

@CanadianForces - 644586525758476288 - Thu Sep 17 18:59:38 2015 - RT  
@CanadianArmy: #TBT 15/09/93 Most intense firefight for Cdn soldiers since Korean War, Medak Pocket Croatia: <http://bit.ly/1NDvdDY> [http...](http://...)

*The tweet mentions how the Battle of Medak Pocket, a kinetic exchange that occurred during a peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia, was the most intense firefight Canadian soldiers had engaged in after the Korean War.*



The tweet above also provides a link to more information about Operation Medak Pocket. The Canadian Army mentions the engagement as a matter of pride in the operation. At the time, however, the accomplishment of the Canadian troops was neither recognized by the government nor publicized to Canadians. As Pugliese (1996) points out, the Canadian Armed Forces were wary of the media after Somalia, and this battle came only days after a call for federal elections, and DND did not want to share the story of a firefight, no matter how courageous, when Canada's task was peacekeeping. The government and the public of Canada were also distracted by the aftermath of the Somalia scandal. Further, the similarities between the Somalian and Croatian peacekeeping missions meant that the Battle of Medak Pocket and the CAF personnel involved were not recognized until nearly a decade later (Off 2004). This attitude is a reflection on the general Canadian preference for peacekeeping instead of combat operations, but also an indicator of the naiveté — real or assumed — of Canadians regarding the requirement of combat capabilities for peacekeeping, especially as more UN peacekeeping operations have a Chapter VII mandate.<sup>18</sup>

Peacekeeping is not mentioned frequently in the tweets. It comes up less than the Korean War, which lasted three years while CAF has officially been involved in peacekeeping since 1956. Canadian troop contributions to the UN have declined significantly in the last two decades, but Canada has still been a small part of some UN missions. Of course, the Korean War is often invoked along with the two World Wars in tweets about combat. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that while the Canadian public identifies itself as part of a peacekeeping nation, the military communicates more about its combat operations, which may have helped shift the state strategic narrative from peacekeeper to warrior nation.

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<sup>18</sup> A Chapter VII UN mandate includes a greater likelihood of use of force in the process of keeping the peace.

On the one hand, it could be argued that a more warrior-like narrative is being generated for CAF. As McKay and Swift (2012) argue in *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety*, the Harper government pushed for a more hawkish image for the military and an image of Canada as a warrior nation. On the other hand, it could also be that the organization itself identifies more with the warrior narrative and sees combat as its “real job” and therefore, mentions of combat are more prevalent than peacekeeping. It could also be a matter of timing insofar as most of these tweets were generated during the tail end of Canada’s involvement in the Afghan War. Because of the primacy of war in the past decade and a half, with limited resources going towards peacekeeping, it could be that combat was and remains top of mind for the military.

After the Cold War, the Canadian military came to resemble Janowitz’s “constabulary force” that takes a protective stance and uses minimal force (Ankersen 2014, 137). The military, of course, is uncomfortable with this role because it is an organization with a rich tradition and a history that it wishes to live up to instead of acting as international police or domestic helpers. In the absence of the functional imperative, the social imperative has taken over in Canada, but as much as the military wishes to serve the national interest and public expectations, it also wants to fulfill its functional imperative. And it is this latter urge that may be guiding the war-heavy social media narrative. It could also be a combination of the military wanting to return to its functional imperative and the Harper government’s efforts to shift the strategic narrative.

#### *1.2.5 Disaster Relief and Search and Rescue Operations*

CAF engages in some non-war, non-combat, non-crime prevention, and non-peacekeeping operations as well, so this category is largely made up of disaster relief and search

and rescue assistance operations within Canada or internationally. Operation LENTUS, for instance, is the name for the domestic disaster relief operations in which CAF engages. The operations are all called Operation LENTUS, but they are numbered to differentiate them by year and instance. Examples of domestic operations include CAF's assistance with the wildfires in Alberta and Saskatchewan and the floods in Alberta and Manitoba as well as ongoing avalanche prevention assistance provided to Parks Canada.

@RCAF - 621013804139343872 - Tue Jul 14 17:50:03 2015 - CH-146 #Griffon helicopters in action at #OpLENTUS: <http://on.fb.me/1UZ9ZC0> #Wildfires #CH146 #RCAF @CFOperations <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CJ5Iw2pUEAA6cLt.jpg>

*This tweet is about the disaster relief provided by CAF during Operation LENTUS 15-02: Saskatchewan wildfire response. The 15 represents the year of operation — 2015, and 02 refers to the number of the operation, that is, the Saskatchewan wildfire was the second incident that required military assistance.*

@CanadianArmy - 487603070734708736 - Fri Jul 11 14:23:25 2014 - #FactFriday DYK 100,000 sandbags were being staked EACH DAY to help reduce flooding in Manitoba #OpLENTUS #manitobaflood #StrongProudReady

*This tweet is about the disaster relief provided by CAF during Operation LENTUS 14-05: Manitoba flood response.*

@CanadianArmy - 544198430411997185 - Sun Dec 14 18:33:11 2014 - RT @CFOperations: #CAF members contribute to @ParksCanada's avalanche control program in Rogers Pass, B.C. during #OpPALACI <http://t.co/cvC...>

*This retweet is about Operation PALACI which is CAF supporting Parks Canada to prevent avalanches in Rogers Pass, B.C.*

CAF also assists with Search and Rescue (SAR) operations domestically. Such operations bring CAF in direct contact with members of the public, often under chaotic and occasionally life-threatening conditions. As the rescuers, CAF personnel, along with any other

civilian organizations assisting with the rescue, would likely earn the gratitude of those they rescue.

@RCAF\_ARC - 554467155774025728 - Mon Jan 12 02:37:26 2015 - RT @JTFAtlantic: #JRCCHalifax tasked a #103Sqn helicopter and two #413Sqn Hercules aircraft to support @JRCCTrentons SAR Op to rescue 8 stranded hunters.

*This is a retweet of the Joint Task Force Atlantic's tweet about an ongoing SAR operation to assist eight hunters stranded in Coral Harbour, Nunavut.*

@RCN\_MRC - 609057809045565440 - Thu Jun 11 18:01:12 2015 - RT @TheNewOcean: #Westcoast #SAR @RCN\_MRC #HMCS Yellowknife assists vessel after a fire in the #InsidePassage. <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/defence-watch/hmcs-whitehorse-provides-assistance-to-vessel-adrift-after-engine-room-fire> <http://...>

*This is a retweet about a SAR operation conducted by the RCN for a vessel in distress due to an engine room fire.*

The SAR operations are, therefore, an important exercise in building rapport with the local communities for CAF. Equally important, tweeting about CAF's efforts during SAR operations can help build a sense of the significance of CAF not only as an organization that protects Canada from outside threats, but also as an organization that helps with human security as needed within Canada for Canadians. International disaster relief operations are usually provided by the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART). International relief operations are all called Operation RENAISSANCE, but they are numbered to differentiate among them by year and instance.

@CanadianForces - 596720145923514368 - Fri May 08 16:55:43 2015 - A #CAF medical technician helps a villager in Kodari, Nepal on May 6, 2015. #NepalQuake #OpRENAISSANCE <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CEf5zzLUIAAozhk.jpg>

*This tweet shares information about the medical services CAF provided in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake along with road clearing and other engineering assistance as part of Operation RENAISSANCE 15-1.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 618194462871810048 - Mon Jul 06 23:07:00 2015 - Members of the #DART board a #CC177 in #Nepal on May 28, 2015 during #OpRENAISSANCE #AirMobility #RCAF #Megaplane <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CJREImOUYAAjf1L.jpg>

*As part of Operation RENAISSANCE 15-1, the RCAF provided support to the Army personnel by flying them over to Nepal with supplies and returning them to Canada at the end of operations.*

@RCN\_MRC - 402801907166486528 - Tue Nov 19 14:13:53 2013 - For daily updates on @canadianforces assistance in the Phillippines, follow @CFOperations #OpRENAISSANCE #Haiyan #humanitarianrelief

*This tweet shares information on how Canadians can learn more about CAF's assistance operation, Operation RENAISSANCE 13-1 in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan.*

CAF's international humanitarian aid operations, similar to the peacekeeping, trafficking prevention, and combat operations help Canada maintain its image as a relevant international security actor. These operations also generate goodwill towards Canada in disaster-struck areas and in the international community as well as goodwill towards the military at home in Canada. Similar to peacekeeping, humanitarian aid operations help maintain the image of the military as an organization with some benevolent purposes along with being a weapon in the Canadian foreign policy toolkit. The frequency of combat and combat training tweets means that the warrior narrative remains primary with a secondary use for warrior capabilities found in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations.

### *1.2.6 Community Involvement*

Community involvement comes up in many forms for CAF, but the three main categories are remembrance, charity, and fitness. The main event around which CAF interacts with the public annually is Remembrance Day (more on Remembrance Day events in the History theme). The charity events are usually related to the fundraising that CAF does for local or national charities or community activities such as Operation HO HO HO, where CAF

personnel play Santa's elves to the children at the Hospital for Sick Children (Sick Kids) in Toronto. Personnel bring gifts and spend time with the sick children.

@RCAF\_ARC - 673927548498223105 - Mon Dec 07 18:10:23 2015 - Op Ho Ho Ho brings #Christmas cheer to hospitalized children. Story : <http://bit.ly/1PQRTSA> #RCAF #Community <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CVpFgsTWwAAVB7G.jpg>

*This is a tweet about Operation HO HO HO that links to a story about the operation.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 541384247127584768 - Sun Dec 07 00:10:37 2014 - RT @JohnWrightCanuk: Proud to be RCAF 400 SQN Hon Colonel who delivered \$5k worth of gifts yesterday to SickKids they raised #OpHOHOHO [http...](http://)

*This is a retweet by the Honorary Colonel of RCAF's 400 Squadron about the funds that CAF raised for Operation HO HO HO and the successful delivery of gifts to the sick children.*

Health-related community involvement from CAF takes the form of fitness events organized by CAF or other organizations, such as the annual Canada Army Run or RCAF Run and the annual Bell Let's Talk Day for raising mental health awareness. The Army and RCAF Runs encourage people to participate in order to improve their fitness as well as help raise funds for programs that help ill and injured soldiers recover and for military families.

@CanadianArmy - 382237141453254656 - Mon Sep 23 20:16:50 2013 - #ArmyRun 2013 generated more than \$300k for Soldier On & Military Families Fund with donations still coming in! <http://ow.ly/p8DpF>

*This is a tweet about the total amount of funds raised by the participants for Army Run 2013.*

CAF also posts tweets with the question: "What did you do for PT today?" The question is usually accompanied by photos of CAF personnel being physically active. The idea appears to be to encourage CAF personnel as well as the public to engage in more physical activity,

particularly with the hashtag, #FitnessMonday. Occasionally, there are also tweets sharing tips about physical training.

@CanadianArmy - 253942099454611456 - Thu Oct 04 19:38:09 2012 - You're out of breath, you've hit the wall, but you have to keep going <http://ow.ly/eefPa> #army #CdnArmy #fitness

*This tweet encourages people to keep working on their fitness.*

@RCN\_MRC - 673931008794849282 - Mon Dec 07 18:24:08 2015 - Today is #CAF #FitnessMonday! In the Navy? Share with us how you stay in shape while at sea. #RCNavy @MARPAAC @RCN\_MARLANT @NAVRESNAV

*This tweet asks how RCN personnel stay fit while at sea, engaging internally with CAF personnel.*

@CanadianForces 0 682554409058975744 - Thu Dec 31 13:30:27 2015 - RT @ForcesJobs: Start the year off with some fitness! #Forces members physical training in the 1960s. #TBT <http://www.forces.ca/en/page/lifeintheforces-75#tab3> <https://...>

*This tweet shares some historical information about fitness in CAF.*

@CanadianArmy - 276408184879583234 - Wed Dec 05 19:30:21 2012 - RT @CanadaArmyRun: During the holidays, it can be tough sticking to a training schedule. Here are some tips from Active to help you out! ...

*This is a retweet sharing fitness tips for staying healthy during the holidays.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 550793621193388033 - Thu Jan 01 23:20:07 2015 - RT @SkiesMag: Jump start your 2015 resolutions with a vintage @RCAF\_ARC #fitness plan for flight crew: <http://bit.ly/1BIFhHV> <http://t.co/R...>

*This is another retweet that shares a fitness plan for staying fit in the new year.*

The other area of health where CAF has been tweeting fairly actively is mental health. One of the biggest Canadian mental health events is the Bell Let's Talk Day that raises awareness about mental health issues in an attempt to remove the stigma associated with mental health problems. The program also raises funds to support mental health initiatives to provide

support and care for the mentally ill as well as to fund research into mental health. CAF participates in this event quite enthusiastically.

@CanadianForces - 559729510409838592 - Mon Jan 26 15:08:09 2015 - RT  
@HonRobNicholson: Mental health stigma is one of the biggest barriers to getting help.  
#StartTheConversation

*This is a retweet of the then Minister of National Defence Rob Nicholson about removing the stigma associated with mental health issues so that people can get help.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 558310513688727552 - Thu Jan 22 17:09:34 2015 - RT @Bell\_LetsTalk:  
How can we reduce the stigma around mental illness? Discover 5 ways:  
<http://ow.ly/HnhKO> #BellLetsTalk

*This is a retweet from the main Bell Let's Talk account about ways to reduce stigma around mental illness.*

@RCN\_MRC - 428224041460441088 - Tue Jan 28 17:52:22 2014 - RT @Comd\_RCN:  
Mental health challenges are real. Don't be afraid to reach-out for help. I did and my career and relationships flourished. #BellLetsTalk

*This is a retweet from the Commander of the RCN sharing his own experiences with mental health issues and getting help. Such a message of reaching out for help can be particularly encouraging coming from a high-ranking officer because it shows that a person can access mental health support without compromising their career.*

CAF's concern with mental health could be attributed partially to the fact that CAF personnel often experience the stigma of mental health more keenly due to the physical and mental "toughness" expected of soldiers. After the surge in combat operations over the past decade and half, some military personnel returning from operations are experiencing mental health problems such as post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, etc. The rate of suicide in the combat arms (31.65) has been nearly twice as high as compared to the other non-combat services (16.52) (see Rolland-Harris, Cyr, and Zamorski 2016). Thus, mental health is a major concern for CAF. By sharing the fact that "tough soldiers" can also experience mental health



issues, the military helps to remove the stigma associated with mental health problems for CAF personnel as well as the larger population.

### *1.2.7 Statements*

Some tweets are quotes from or statements made by military commanders and other military personnel as well as any statements by related actors such as the Governor General, who is the Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian military as the representative of the Queen, or the Minister of National Defence. These tweets are usually about organizational events, and their importance lies in the fact that they attach a name and face to and amplify the voices of those who make up the organization. The public gets to know what high-ranking officers, such as the Chief of Defence Staff or the commanders of the services, think about particular events as representatives of CAF, which in turn can help create a clearer picture of the organization. While I did not analyze the individual Twitter accounts of these officials, their tweets are frequently retweeted by the CAF accounts that I did analyze. As such the references to individual statements is with respect to only those statements that were retweeted by the CAF accounts.

@RCAF\_ARC - 574574652875395073 - Sun Mar 08 14:17:26 2015 - RT @Comd\_RCN: Extremely proud to be part of a world class Navy and #CAF that is at the forefront of gender equality #IWD2015

*This tweet, for instance, is a retweet of the Commander of the RCN's tweet on CAF's progressive stance on gender equality.*

@CanadianArmy - 270321040935239683 - Mon Nov 19 00:22:13 2012 - RT @Army\_Comd: At the Fredericton airport welcoming back our soldiers from OP ATTENTION in Afghanistan. Great to see them home! [http://t ...](#)

*This tweet is a retweet of the Army Commander's tweet about welcoming CAF personnel back in Canada from their tour in Afghanistan.*

Undoubtedly, these tweets are not posted off the cuff. Most likely, they are thoroughly vetted before being posted to Twitter in order to ensure that they meet all legal and ethical requirements of all social media activity as per government policy as well as the decorousness of the office these personnel represent. Nonetheless, they add a more individual touch to the social media presence of CAF and its strategic communication efforts.

### ***1.3 Why Does CAF Do What It Does***

These tweets are few and far between, but occasionally CAF tweets about what can be considered their *raison d'être* — protecting the state and the public. The low frequency of tweeting is probably because the fact that the military defends the state is implicitly understood, but sometimes, the military makes the reasons explicit in its tweets.

#### ***1.3.1 Sovereignty***

The mention of sovereignty and its protection is interesting because there have been limited threats historically to Canadian sovereignty. It is only the War of 1812 that truly threatened Canadian sovereignty, and it is quite far in the past. Threats might emerge as the Arctic melts, but in that case, CAF will need the support of the US defeat states like Russia should they choose to threaten Canadian sovereignty from the North. CAF, due to its limited size and capability, could only play an assistive role in maintaining the sovereignty of Canada. The sovereignty related tweets are usually in reference to the sovereignty of the Canadian Arctic, something that the Harper government particularly emphasized in its security agenda.

These tweets are also usually about the annual training or sovereignty operations that take place in the Canadian North.

@CanadianForces - 618158347167137792 - Mon Jul 06 20:43:29 2015 - #CAF Assert #Arctic Sovereignty through #OpNUNAKPUT 2015 <http://ow.ly/PfJ8e> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CJQjva4WsAAA6Pl.jpg>

*This tweet about Operation NUNAKPUT states that CAF asserts Canadian sovereignty. The operation is an entirely domestic operation with partners from different agencies and departments working with CAF.*

@CanadianArmy - 506888799369326592 - Tue Sep 02 19:38:01 2014 - #OpNANOOK 2014 has concluded, highlighting CAF's ability to exercise sovereignty and support safety in the North. <http://bit.ly/1tXMBRp>

*This tweet about Operation NANOOK reiterates the point about CAF asserting Canadian sovereignty in the previous tweet. The operation is a training exercise with partners from different agencies and departments working with CAF.*

@RCN\_MRC - 361873361770512386 - Mon Jul 29 15:38:27 2013 - HMCS Summerside departed Halifax today to conduct sovereignty patrols and joint training exercises in the arctic <http://bit.ly/12XSdbD>

*Another tweet about Operation NANOOK from the RCN that mentions the role the navy plays in sovereignty protection.*

The numerous training and partnership tweets indicate that CAF's main task is the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty. In other words, these tweets state the obvious, which is interesting in light of the fact that Canada or the sanctity of Canadian sovereignty is not under threat. Sovereignty might become more important in the coming years, as the Arctic continues to melt rapidly and economic opportunities in the region open up. Because Canada is not under threat currently, tweeting about sovereignty sounds unnecessarily nationalistic. On the other hand, the military's job is to worry about present as well as future threats. In either case, the military's warrior nature is communicated to be at the service of a Canada that may need its borders defended.

The talk about sovereignty also references a defining feature of statehood. The military is created by the state for its own defence, that is, for the defence of its sovereignty. So, the tweets about sovereignty could also be read as a reference to the military institution's "origin story." Speaking of sovereignty then is the military speaking of its own identity. As mentioned above, because the defence of sovereignty is the purpose of any military, the Canadian military talking about it is not exceptional; rather, it is simply an everyday matter for the military because talking about threats to the state is in the first bullet point in the job description. On the other hand, the talk of asserting sovereignty and defending the North also create the kind of militaristic and nationalistic narratives which the Harper government regularly promoted, particularly in relation to the Arctic. These sovereignty tweets, therefore, also communicate the Harper government's shifting strategic narrative during this period of time.

### *1.3.2 International Relations*

Because of Canada's comparatively weak military compared to the countries that surround it, contributing to international partnerships and building a strong relationship with the neighbours would serve Canada well, and CAF plays its role in the building and maintenance of such relations through their work guided by the Canadian government's foreign policy decisions.

CAF's domestic and international relations tweets are discussed under the Partnership theme.

### *1.4 How Does CAF Do What It Does*

These tweets are primarily about what materiel and infrastructure the military uses in a variety of contexts to discharge a wide range of duties. There are references to partnerships here

because the Canadian military often works on a variety of multinational and multiple-stakeholder missions. The partnerships, however, are discussed more fully in another section.

This section deals with CAF's equipment — broadly understood — related tweets.

#### *1.4.1 Equipment*

This code also contains references to infrastructure upgrades, changes in the uniforms, etc. There are some tweets about the defence budgets and improvements to CAF's equipment and infrastructure of military bases. These budget and infrastructure tweets can work towards creating a sense of transparency and accountability from the organization. On the other hand, these tweets can also highlight the how poorly funded CAF has been over the past few years. Of course, the lack of resources might be more apparent to those who follow the news about CAF and read between the lines. For the general public, these tweets might be best understood as CAF's attempts to create a sense of accountability.

@CanadianArmy - 363028208964210689 - Thu Aug 01 20:07:24 2013 - Right ideas, equip & infrastructure crucial to empowering Cdn soldiers in volatile future security env: <http://tinyurl.com/pnvxor6>

*This is a rare tweet insofar as it mentions the need for modernizing the military and its equipment and infrastructure directly.*

@CanadianArmy - 443894272807698433 - Wed Mar 12 23:40:16 2014 - COS Land Strat: Strategy for infrastructure, equipment and supportive systems #StrongProudReady <http://bit.ly/1ieh1jm>

*This is a tweet that links to a story about the Chief of Staff Land Strategy's planning process for the Army's needs and growth in the long term.*

There are many tweets that mention equipment by name, for example, CF-18 and CF-100 aircraft, CP-140 Aurora aircraft, Carl Gustav recoilless rifle, etc. Mentioning equipment can

be read as another means of establishing and distinguishing CAF's organizational identity, where those that belong to the military in-group know what a particular piece of equipment is and does. This would be particularly relevant if the tweet only mentions the equipment name without any additional explanation, in which case those who belong to the in-group are separated from the rest by not needing to search the name to grasp the entire meaning of the tweet. In a way, then, the mention of weapons, and sometimes their technical capabilities, can help create a sense of organizational identity that is closely tied to the uniform, weapons, and other infrastructure of the military and the warrior narrative broadly speaking.

The mentions of equipment, logistical matters, and infrastructure are similar perhaps to how an instrument can become part of the identity of a musician. For example, it is difficult to think of Yo-Yo Ma without recalling his cello as well. Similarly, uniforms and individual weapons can become part of CAF personnel's identities. Larger weapons such as artillery, tanks, aircraft, etc. can become part of the team identity of the group of personnel involved in operating and maintaining that equipment. The largest weapons of them all, ships, can become home away from home for sailors who spend weeks and months on the ship. Various weapons, thus, relate the identity of the military organization as one that is engaged in the profession on managing violence.

Granatstein (2002) argues that the Canadian Army has suffered from a lack of government and public support and interest in building a professional, well-trained, and well-equipped army, and that despite this lack of interest, the Canadian Army has shown an ability to shine in times of stress. The RCAF and RCN have similarly suffered from a lack of attention to the military organization, particularly a lack of funding. So, the tweets about the investment in

CAF infrastructure and equipment take on a note of advertising that CAF is being modernized and improved in light of the changing conflict environment.

@CanadianArmy - 604289326730600448 - Fri May 29 14:12:57 2015 - DND announces \$20 million investment to improve infrastructure at Garrison Petawawa  
<http://bit.ly/1HAqMSk> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CGLd8LsUYAEb2lQ.jpg>

*This is a tweet about an investment in infrastructure improvement at Garrison Petawawa.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 614226259862687744 - Fri Jun 26 00:18:46 2015 - News Release: PM announces support to improve #infrastructure at CFB #Bagotville: <http://bit.ly/1eKmqkQ>  
#CAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CIYrh0GWgAADm8u.jpg>

*This is a tweet sharing a link to a news release about infrastructure improvement funding for CFB Bagotville.*

These tweets talk mainly about what the military is receiving from the government, but do not touch upon the subject of how far behind the military already is due to Canadian governments constantly putting the military last. The lack of modern equipment and infrastructure is something that the national news media have covered thoroughly, so the general public is aware at some level that the military is fighting with aged equipment that is not always fit for the tasks assigned to the personnel. According to the 2015–2016 Departmental Performance Report, many of the projects dealing with acquiring, upgrading, or disposing of equipment are behind schedule (Department of National Defence Canada 2014). Half of the projects initiated under the Canada First Defence Strategy are behind schedule. Most Materiel Upgrade and Technological Insertion Projects and Upgrades are also not on their original schedule, and only 64 per cent of the upgrade projects meet the more recent schedule. Materiel disposal is also behind schedule.

What is missing in these equipment-, infrastructure-, and budget-related CAF tweets, of course, is any critique of government policy that has delayed the modernization of the Canadian

military equipment over and over and over again. Such critiques would fly in the face of the expectations of civil-military relations theory and would, thus, cast a shadow on the military's reputation. While more information about and government transparency on defence procurement would be welcome, the information should, as per CMR, come from the government or the media instead of the military. The military asking for equipment or tweeting about the aged-out equipment might come across as the organization stepping outside its bounds of managing violence and engaging in political decision making or forcing the government's hand. The latter would be particularly problematic should the public side with the military because it would bring to the front Huntington's fears about the military stepping outside civil control.

#### *1.4.2 Partnership*

A lot of the work CAF does is in partnership with domestic and international allies. These allies, particularly the international allies, often appear on Twitter. See the discussion for Theme 4: Partnership for more on this aspect of how CAF does its work.

#### *1.5 When Does CAF Do What It Does*

Many of the things that CAF does are dictated by their partners, whether bilateral partners such as the US or the UK or institutions such as NATO or the UN. Prior to the passage of the Statute of Westminster in December 1931, as a self-governing dominion of the UK, Canada participated in any wars that the UK decided on because foreign policy decisions for Canada were made by the UK. While World War II was the first time that Canada declared war as an independent state instead of as a dominion of the United Kingdom, it was still a



declaration that followed the UK's own declaration of war after Germany invaded Poland (Granatstein 2009). The government makes the decisions, and CAF follows those decisions and engages as ordered.

@CanadianArmy - 642093998316888064 - Thu Sep 10 21:55:13 2015 - #OnThisDay in Canadian military history: September 10, 1939, Canada declares war on Germany. <http://ow.ly/S3vc6> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/COktFtFWEEAA4HaO.jpg>

*This is a tweet about Canada's declaration of war on Germany after the UK declared war.*

With respect to training and other operations, Canada is part of many joint operations such as Operation CARIBBE and joint training exercises such as JOINTEX, so CAF's timetables are dictated to an extent by the timing of these events. The information about CAF participating in these exercises and operations is often tweeted about a few days after the events, likely to ensure operational security.

@RCN\_MRC - 659105296229494784 - Tue Oct 27 20:32:02 2015 - Over 1200 #RCNavy sailors, 6 warships, 1 submarine are participating in #TJ15 #JOINTEX 15 in the North Atlantic: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations-exercises/jointex.page>

*This is a tweet about the multinational training exercise JOINTEX (This exercise was combined with NATO's Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE).*

@RCAF\_ARC - 543161114532773889 - Thu Dec 11 21:51:15 2014 - RT @CFOperations: #CF18 prepares to take off for night training during the #NATO Baltic Air Policing mission @RCAF\_ARC <http://t.co/nRtOtZsl...>

*This is a tweet about another multinational air training exercise with NATO.*

What is worth noting is that CAF is involved in operations and training for forthcoming operations around the clock and throughout the year. CAF's alertness and posture might change depending on whether the government is thinking of deploying the military. The military must

remain in a state of readiness because even if brigades, ships, or squadrons are not being deployed right now, they may be deployed at short notice. The military's task is not just engaging in a variety of operations, combat and otherwise, but also to maintain the force so that it is able to engage in those operations at short notice.

### ***1.6 Where Does CAF Do What It Does***

CAF is part of active operations in Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. Most of these operations, with the exception a few domestic operations in the Arctic and SAR operations in other parts of Canada, take place in partnership with other states or under the purview of alliances like NATO or international organizations such as the UN.

@RCAF\_ARC - 591249337818210305 - Thu Apr 23 14:36:41 2015 - Op NUNALIVUT concludes in High Arctic. Story: <http://bit.ly/1blBDqg> #WeAreWinter #TrueNorthStrongAndFree #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CDSKI66UsAAQNvD.jpg>

*This is a tweet about domestic training in the Arctic.*

@CanadianForces - 552465049869373445 - Tue Jan 06 14:01:46 2015 - Learn about #OpPALACI, the #CAF's efforts to prevent avalanches in Rogers Pass, BC, here: <http://ow.ly/GyrBz>. @CanadianArmy

*This is a tweet about domestic operations to prevent avalanches in British Columbia, a Canadian province.*

@CanadianArmy - 562353792398925824 - Mon Feb 02 20:56:06 2015 - Canadian & US soldiers join more than 2000 participants for Exercise #AlliedSpirit in Germany. #StrongProudReady <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B83hy0eIEAEYzKh.jpg>

*This is a tweet about an international training exercise in Germany.*

@RCN\_MRC - 449310941017284608 - Thu Mar 27 22:24:10 2014 - RT @CFOperations: #HMCSRegina boards a dhow during #OpArtemis maritime security / counter-terrorism ops off Africa's coast on Mar 2

*This is a retweet about the RCN's work during international operations across the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 572498978991972355 - Mon Mar 02 20:49:27 2015 - RT  
@CFOperations: Today in 2004: #OpHALO began, Canada's contribution to a secure and stable environment in #Haiti <http://ow.ly/i/8BCIQ>

*This is a retweet about CAF's stability operations in Haiti under the UN's auspices.*

@CanadianForces - 592687646293499904 - Mon Apr 27 13:52:01 2015 - #Canada  
deploys elements of the #DART to assist in humanitarian crisis in #Nepal  
<http://ow.ly/MaHuh> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CDmmRdiWYAA141w.jpg>

*This is a tweet about CAF's operations in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake.*

CAF works in a variety of roles at home and abroad. The work it does at home is often in the realm of search and rescue and disaster relief, which can help build a stronger relationship between the public and the military, particularly those members of the public that CAF assists directly during their time of need. But domestic assistance also goes towards building a rapport for the military with those not directly being helped because they still see, hear, read media stories along with tweets and social media posts about how the military is using its capabilities to assist at home. International operations are, of course, the space where the military primarily engages as a foreign policy tool. CAF, however, performs not only in a combat role but also a wide range of other operations from stabilization and peacekeeping to disaster relief and humanitarian aid by land, air, and/or sea in countries around the world. Sharing information about these operations — domestic and international — works both as a way for accounting for the work that CAF does as a public organization and as a way to further build the image of CAF as a competent military that represents Canada well in international operations with allies as well as when providing aid to disaster affected communities abroad.

## **Theme 2: History**

History is deeply embedded in CAF's Twitter timelines. There are constant references to the World Wars and the Korean War with some references to peacekeeping missions. This matches my understanding of the Canadian military's social media use as an exercise in identity projection to its imagined public. There is glorification of the achievements of CAF as well as individual personnel in these tweets. These achievements are held up as example of what the Canadian military did when it was needed, and they reiterate the role that the military played in shaping the identity of the country on the international stage.

It is difficult to imagine that Canada would have been taken as a serious international actor without the partnerships built during the World Wars. CAF's work went into forging and strengthening those partnerships through various wars, and this is an aspect of the national identity that is tied closely with the organizational identity. That Canada and its allies have all benefited from each other's goodwill, much of it derived from a bloody history of fighting together, cannot be disputed; however, with the passage of time, the memory of those wars can get hazy. Social media allows for a refreshing of that memory.

The organization also appears to yearn for clarity in these tweets. The World Wars, the Korean War, and the early peacekeeping engagements provided the world, and CAF, with very clear enemies and clear goals with respect to those enemies. Victory, hard-won as it was, was usually a clear victory. The current conflict situation is different in that there is less clarity about who is enemy and friend, and the victories are not as clear as they used to be. Warfare is becoming more complicated and more technological, and the role of the warrior is not what it used to be.

Social and cultural differences within and without countries, economic crises, and increasing political complexities also contribute to the muddying of waters for military actors. CAF's most recent war in Afghanistan ended not on a victorious high note, but rather on a recall of troops based at least in some part on declining public support for the mission and the public's mixed perception of the success of the mission. CAF's contribution to the airstrikes against ISIS also ended with the new government's withdrawal of combat aircraft from Operation IMPACT. There was no clear victory there either. In some ways, the constant remembrance of the past appears just as much as an act of remembering the sacrifices of the past CAF personnel as it is an opportunity to celebrate the clear victories won.

@CanadianArmy - 342720601041018880 - Thu Jun 06 19:12:13 2013 - D-Day. Juno Beach: lovely backdrop to fierce battle, sets stage for victory but costs 5,000 Cdn lives. <http://tinyurl.com/l9xwv2y> #canadianarmy

*This tweet celebrates the victory of D-Day while also acknowledging the massive loss of lives.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 586256876620361730 - Thu Apr 09 19:58:26 2015 - Air power and the battle for Vimy Ridge - Story, photos: <http://bit.ly/1FFRgmU> #WWI #Vimy #Victory #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CCLNhVpWAAAjGzp.jpg>

*This tweet shares the story of the RCAF's role in the Canadian victory in the battle for Vimy Ridge.*

The tweets from all CAF accounts also set up a narrative of brave warriors that stretches back in time to some of the most important wars of the 20th century. These wars and warriors left a legacy of courage and daring for those CAF personnel that follow as well as for Canadian citizens who enjoy the fruits of the past labour and sacrifice.

@RCAF\_ARC - 605779541617831936 - Tue Jun 02 16:54:32 2015 - June 2 is commemorated as "Billy Bishop Day" in honour of the famous #WWI ace. Story:

<http://bit.ly/1M1p6Vd> #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CGgpSFoUgAAnoep.jpg>

*This tweet shares the story of Captain William Avery “Billy” Bishop, RCAF’s first ever Victoria Cross recipient.*

@CanadianForces - 600703207673823232 - Tue May 19 16:42:59 2015 -  
#TributeTuesday to Tommy Prince - Prince of the Brigade. Full biography:  
<http://ow.ly/N93Qt> #Aboriginals #AAW  
<http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CFYgUtmVIAAeuzK.jpg>

*This is a tweet about the heroic acts of Sgt. Tommy Prince during World War II that garnered him the Military Medal as well as the US Army’s Silver Star medal.*

Many tweets refer back to the achievements of CAF during the World Wars and the Korean War. Twitter hashtags such as #ThrowBackThursday, occasionally abbreviated as #TBT, encourage other tweeters to share historical information whether selfies from a year ago or childhood pictures or important social, political, cultural events from history. CAF uses the hashtag fairly consistently to remember Canadian victories and achievements in previous wars and operations along with stories of Canadian soldiers who fought in those wars or participated in other operations.

@RCAF\_ARC - 558292842913996800 - Thu Jan 22 15:59:20 2015 - From 1917 to today...read about the history of 16 Wing #Borden at: <http://on.fb.me/1unxeX3>  
#ThrowbackThursday #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B790YbCIEAIpyvc.jpg>

*This is a tweet about 16 Wing, a unit of the RCAF stationed in Borden, Ontario, with an image of some the members of 16 Wing in 1917.*

@CanadianForces - 593769787727183872 - Thu Apr 30 13:32:03 2015 - #TBT: The Battle of the Atlantic campaign was fought at sea from 1939 to 1945. #WW2 #LestWeForget #BattleofAtlantic <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CD1-eUwUgAAcZ5f.jpg>

*This is a tweet about the Battle of the Atlantic with an image from the battle.*

What is useful about such sharing of history is that it builds a connection to the past of CAF. While Canada has participated in various wars and operations, public memory is fragile

insofar as it comes into play only when we are reminded of a shared history. So, while most Canadians might know that Canada was an active participant in both World Wars, the memory is not something they touch upon in their everyday lives. The usual time for the memory to appear is during the week leading up to the annual Remembrance Day celebrations on November 11. In some cases, the memory of Canadian participation in various wars might also emerge when passing by a war memorial, but even impressive physical memorials can fade into the background if they become part of a routine. The #RememberThem and #ThrowBackThursday (or #TBT) hashtags allows CAF to jog the memories of their followers by providing cues more frequently than the annual Remembrance Day event. Such weekly reminders (#TBT) of what CAF has previously achieved also strengthen the warrior narrative by referencing past battles.

@CanadianForces - 649669085140287492 - Thu Oct 01 19:35:54 2015 - #TBT Women in the Forces for #WomensHistoryMonth For more photos, visit <http://ow.ly/SUfKF> #RememberThem <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CQQWlt6WwAApZq1.jpg>

*This is a #TBT (#ThrowbackThursday) tweet that also uses the hashtag #RememberThem with respect to women's contributions to CAF.*

@RCN\_MRC - 659710141844070401 - Thu Oct 29 12:35:29 2015 - Have a story for Veterans' Week? Use #RememberThem & #RememberRCN to share.

*This a tweet asking the followers of the RCN Twitter account to share their stories as veterans or as those who knew veterans of CAF and the RCN using the #RememberThem and #RememberRCN.*

There are other hashtags like #FactFriday or #DidYouKnow (occasionally abbreviated as #DYK) that are used to share historical information about CAF operations.

@CanadianArmy - 581531739035598848 - Fri Mar 27 19:02:25 2015 - #FactFriday March 27, 1964 Canadians started UN peacekeeping duties in Cyprus. More:

<http://bit.ly/1m88leM> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CBHtFDXUMAAC7RW.jpg>

*This is a tweet about when Canada began its role as a peacekeeper in Cyprus.*

@CanadianForces - 594622729900417027 - Sat May 02 22:01:21 2015 - #DYK:  
#JohnMcCrae volunteered for deployment and fought in both the Boer War and First  
World War #FWW #RememberThem

<http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CECGONQUEAIIfSx6.jpg>

*This is a tweet that shares information about the life of Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, who died during World War I. His poem, In Flanders Fields, and the symbol of the poppy has become a mark of remembrance for fallen soldiers.*

The more frequent discussion of previous wars and operations helps not only to keep CAF in the public's memory, but also to associate the current generation of military personnel with past personnel and the military's strategic communication to the state's strategic narratives. The past soldiers and events are nearly always described in terms of heroism and sacrifice. Current soldiers not only get to relate to the past members, but also to bask in the some of that reflected glory. There is a link established between the heroes of the past and the present-day soldiers and between the sacrifices of the past and the present-day demands made of CAF and its personnel. The public can "see" how difficult and occasionally heroic the life of military personnel can be.

@CanadianArmy - 574582422785888256 - Sun Mar 08 14:48:19 2015 - Women, past and present, have been a critical part of the Canadian Army's success both at home and abroad #IWD2015 [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B\\_1TqtcUgAAjLYe.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B_1TqtcUgAAjLYe.jpg)

*This tweet mentions how women have been part of CAF's success both historically and currently.*

@RCN\_MRC - 524614736051470336 - Tue Oct 21 17:34:34 2014 - RT @RCNCPO: 21 Oct NIOBE DAY. @RCN\_MRC commemorating the past celebrating the present committed to the future. Our Sailors

*This tweet celebrates Niobe Day, the day that the first Canadian warship (purchased from the Royal Navy) entered Canadian territorial waters, which in turn marked the birth of the RCN.*



Public memory is related not only to the events of the past, but also to the future insofar as it is an encouragement to remember the past forevermore (Casey 2004). In some ways what CAF's use of Twitter hashtags like #ThrowbackThursday and #TributeTuesday does is either jog the public memory with information about the military history of the country or create new points of reference for that history. Certainly, tweets are ephemeral compared to the stone and metal sinew of a war memorial, but their strength may lie in repetition, where repetition is not one of the stories of individual persons or events, but instead a repetition of the organization's warrior ethos as embodied by its personnel. These tweets also act as an introduction to the past for many who may know of Canada's involvement in various conflicts around the world but may have no knowledge of the battles and those who fought them.

@RCN\_MRC - 660198365347586049 - Fri Oct 30 20:55:30 2015 - #OTD We remember HMCS/NCSM Galiano, lost with 39 lives on 30 Oct 1918. Nous nous souvenons, coulé avec 39 personnes à son bord. #RememberRCN

*This tweet reminds the public to remember those lost with the sinking of the HMCS Galiano at the end of World War I. The hashtag #OTD refers to On This Day, that is, On This Day in CAF's history, HMCS Galiano was lost.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 596717036644003843 - Fri May 08 16:43:22 2015 - Among Canada's "Few": The #RCAF's No. 1 Squadron in the Battle of Britain: Story: <http://bit.ly/1IoMIsN> #RCAFBoB75 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CEf2-3RUUAAom5E.jpg>

*This tweet refers to the role that the RCAF played in the Battle of Britain during World War II utilizing part of Prime Minister Winston Churchill's famous statement: "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."*

Regarding the endurance of public memory, Casey (2004, 17) cites the role of public monuments in both looking at the past and the future: "Public monuments embody this Janusian trait: their very massiveness and solidity almost literally enforce this futurity, while inscriptions

and certain easily identifiable features (for example, the giant seated Abraham Lincoln of the Lincoln Memorial) pull the same physical object toward the past it honors.” These monuments are, however, fixed in place. Those who either live in the same location as the monuments or can travel in order to visit these places of ritualistic remembrance can access the memory of the past and ponder the implications for the future, but for those living in a different place and unable to travel, these spaces and the associated acts of public remembering are often out of reach. There is a boundedness of public memory to place insofar as there are places where people come together to enact and engage in remembrance.

Social media cannot be a space of public remembrance in the same physical way that a monument or cenotaph might be, but they provide a virtual space for connection and engaging in public remembrance, especially during events such as Remembrance Day or other military anniversaries. The use of hashtags, reply, like, and retweet functions allow for shared remembrance even for those who are unable to be in spaces where the monuments are or where ceremonial events are being held.

@CanadianArmy - 399204994618257408 - Sat Nov 09 16:01:02 2013 - RT  
@EEDC\_MICHAEL: Please #remember & #honour those who have fallen & those who continue to serve: <http://bit.ly/17g6n95> THANK YOU @CanadianArmy

*This is a retweet of a remembrance-related tweet tweeted by a member of the public.*

@CanadianForces - 664468460768993280 - Wed Nov 11 15:43:20 2015 - LIVE on #Periscope:  
At the #NationalWarMemorial for this year’s National Remembrance Day Ceremony.  
#RememberThem  
[https://www.periscope.tv/w/aRNZmDUzMzk1MjN8MWpNSmdWYmd3cUFHTFcBIgEvK7V3HZpe8t01143x6\\_59HE0\\_0hnid0nj3KYw](https://www.periscope.tv/w/aRNZmDUzMzk1MjN8MWpNSmdWYmd3cUFHTFcBIgEvK7V3HZpe8t01143x6_59HE0_0hnid0nj3KYw)

*This tweet shares information on how the public can view the Remembrance Day ceremony at the National War Memorial via Periscope, a social media app owned by Twitter.*

A constituent feature of public memory is “its formation through ongoing interchange of ideas and thoughts, opinions and beliefs. It is just because public memory is so much in the arena of open discussion and debate that it is also subject to revision or, for that matter, resumption” (Casey 2004, 30). Public memory, thus, is a living thing that is animated in the communication and interpretation of those memories. CAF’s sharing of memories allows for revision and resumption of the military history of Canada, and this is important because Canada’s military history is then opened to public view and becomes part of the everyday. Hashtags like #TributeTuesday, #FactFriday, #DYK, #OnThisDay, #ThrowbackThursday allow for a sharing of Canadian military history on a daily or weekly basis. The communication of military history is intimately bound with the narrative of the state at large through the defence that the military enacted in the past.

CAF’s role in World War II, for instance, bolstered Canada’s international partnerships while also carving out a Canadian identity separate from the British. The RCAF was the only air force that fought under the Canadian flag during the Battle of Britain, while pilots from countries such as Poland fought under the British flag and as part of the Royal Air Force. This insistence on fighting as a separate state while fighting as an ally of the UK helped Canada step away from its previously subordinate role with respect to the UK. Certainly, the decision to fight under its own flag was not a decision made by the military independent of the state, but the example illustrates how CAF has often been a political tool of the state, helping carve out a distinctly Canadian identity in the world.

@CanadianForces - 662302639804309504 - Thu Nov 05 16:17:08 2015 - #DYK This year marks 75 years since the Battle of Britain raged in the summer and fall of 1940. #RememberThem #BoB75 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CTD4vcUWcAAGFkG.jpg>

*This tweet mentions the Battle of Britain Anniversary in the lead up to the Remembrance Day celebrations.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 644959813512888321 - Fri Sep 18 19:42:56 2015 - #RCAF invitation to #BattleofBritain 75th commemorative ceremony on Parliament Hill: <http://bit.ly/1F71fFt> #BoB75 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CPNbiCaWUAANSa.jpg>

*The RCAF celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and invited members of the public to attend the event on Parliament Hill.*

Organizational memories and anniversaries include various battle victories, losses of life in battle, the establishment of the three CAF services, and other events such as the establishing of regiments and commissioning of ships, etc. Anniversary celebrations help root CAF's past in the present of the Canadian identity. These historical events shared through actual ceremonies or virtual tweets communicate the organization's identity as part of the state's narrative.

@CanadianArmy - 588734764837896193 - Thu Apr 16 16:04:40 2015 - #TBT Rifleman R.M. Douglas with locals celebrating the liberation of Deventer, Netherlands 10/04/1945 #Netherlands70 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CCubJg-UkAIbU1P.png>

*This tweet shares an image from CAF's liberation of the Netherlands, marking 70 years since the Canadian liberation of the Netherlands during World War II.*

@CanadianForces - 674311271915921408 - Tue Dec 08 19:35:09 2015 - #DYK: John McCrae's In Flanders Fields was first published on December 8, 1915. #RememberThem <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CVuih1wU4AEwnLB.jpg>

*This tweet shares the date when Lt. Col. John McCrae's poem In Flanders Fields was first published during World War I.*

@RCN\_MRC - 660977453012242432 - Mon Nov 02 00:31:19 2015 - 1 Nov #OTD: Destroyers HMCS Patriot & Patrician, & light cruiser HMCS Aurora are commissioned into the RCN in 1920. #RememberRCN #RCNavy

*This tweet shares the commissioning dates of three RCN vessels.*

The mixing up of historical tweets such as #TBT with the tweets of more current work such as exercises and other operations works well to thoroughly blend CAF's past with the its present. By making its work a part of the everyday through social media, CAF can establish a sense of continuity between its past and present. With the recent war in Afghanistan and engagements in operations in the Middle East, there is a contemporary military history that is being shaped along with the strategic narratives of the state. These narratives shape not only the interpretations of the past, but they also shape the future of the organization. Further, with a changing conflict environment and a couple of terror attacks on Canadian soil, the public is slightly more aware of security issues both domestically and internationally and is subsequently more aware of the Canadian military as an organization and the missions in which they are involved.

@CanadianForces - 568772830130786304 - Fri Feb 20 14:03:04 2015 - RT  
@CDAInstitute: #TheOC2015 - @darrellbricker: Canada has 62% support for coalition airstrikes against #ISIS, higher than #Afghanistan. US is at 74%.

*This is a retweet of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute's tweet of Darrell Bricker's statement regarding public support for Canadian involvement in airstrikes against ISIS during the Institute's Ottawa Conference on Security and Defence. (Bricker is the Chief Executive Officer, Public Affairs at Ipsos.)*

As Ankersen (2014, 63–64) notes, history and its interpretations are what create and sustain legitimacy: “*interpreted* history, shaped by language and the subjective perspectives of those who record it, publish it, and pass it on, ceases to be history and is transformed into something much greater. It takes on far more potency, as far as the establishment of legitimacy is concerned, in the form of myth” [original emphasis]. The military has its history open to access by the public directly, but more frequently, that history is revealed to the public by academics, who tell the military story, even as they interpret those histories through their own

lenses and biases and the state's strategic narratives. Over time, the way history, myths, and norms are interpreted changes (Ankersen 2014). What myths inspire action and which ones don't will change as the context changes. The Canadians as peacekeepers myth, for instance, appears to be changing since the Canadian military focused on its combat capabilities in Afghanistan, particularly with the Harper government's more hawkish approach. Social media allow CAF to share its own story, which is useful in that the military interprets its own history; however, the military still might not be able to tell the complete story due to concerns around implicating other actors or stepping outside the bounds of norms such as the civil control over the military.

Instability of meaning, or indeterminacy, is what allows room for actors' agency in a given context. How particular actors choose to interpret their historical role in a given circumstance guides their actions going forward. In the current conflict environment, CAF's interpretation of its own and the state's history creates a sense of Canada as a state whose role in peacekeeping and aid operations was ancillary to its role in wars and combat operations. As Kasurak (2013) points out, one of the main reasons for the discordant civil-military relations in Canada is that no one seems to have a clear idea of what the Canadian military's role is to be: a small military constabulary that can be moved around the world to provide peacekeeping assistance or put to work at home helping with quasi-military tasks such as disaster relief and search and rescue; or a small but fully combat-capable force that can assist with quasi-military tasks and peacekeeping, but retain military tasks such as engagement in war and conflict zones as its primary *raison d'être*. The military has always leaned towards the latter option, and based on CAF tweets, the military has chosen to emphasize its martial identity in its strategic communication.

This privileging of the warrior history of CAF may also be a result of the ideological orientation of the leadership of the political party in power. As noted above, the Conservative Party of Canada was in power with Stephen Harper as Prime Minister for the duration during which I collected most of the tweets in my dataset. The oldest tweets are from September 2012, so the Conservative Party's communication strategy was well entrenched in various departments including DND and CAF. McKay and Swift (2012), for instance, argue that the Harper government was responsible for the turn to a warrior narrative. There are over a hundred retweets in the CAF Twitter account of tweets from the Ministers of National Defence, in particular Rob Nicholson and Jason Kenney, who were the Ministers of National Defence during most of the timeline of the collected tweets.

CAF retweeting ministers' tweets is an indicator that there was ample tweeting from ministers about the military's work on combat operations. Whether this was part of a government effort to elevate CAF's warrior history over its peacekeeping work is difficult to say decisively. Beeby (2015) notes how the Harper administration sent a request to departments to "send retweets promoting a family tax measure not yet passed by Parliament, including a hashtag with the Conservative slogan #StrongFamilies." With this case in mind, it is easy to imagine other cases and other departments, including DND/CAF, that were requested to do something the Harper government's way. The rhetorical hawkishness of the Conservative government's narrative combined with the ideals of CMR would translate to a warrior orientation in CAF's tweets, which would also support the military's interest in promoting its warrior identity.

As the tweets below indicate, the ministers always spoke of CAF and their current and past combat missions in a positive, if not adulatory, tone, which may be expected of the

Minister of National Defence. What is interesting, however, is that despite the positive tweets about the military's past and present work and achievements, the ministers and the Harper government did not do much for the military. The Harper government despite its "rebranding" of Canada as a warrior nation, constant praise of the military, and public promises to increase the defence budget, in fact provided little in the form of increased budgetary support to CAF (Brewster 2014). By some accounts, the increase in budget was small enough to be negligible (Berthiaume 2014). In other words, the Conservative Party's strategic communication about the military in its tweets was more about the Party's interest in shifting the state's strategic narrative than it was about any real commitment to the military organization. The military and its ability to retweet the MNDs' tweets worked to amplify the Harper government's message even when the government did not live up to its promises.

@CanadianForces - 551067324800073728 - Fri Jan 02 17:27:43 2015 - RT @HonRobNicholson: I encourage all Canadians to keep @CanadianForces members deployed overseas in their thoughts and prayers. #CAF

*This is a retweet of Minister Rob Nicholson's tweet requesting Canadians to keep CAF personnel in their thoughts.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 595024565362823168 - Mon May 04 00:38:06 2015 - RT @jkenney: Great day at 2 airbases in Kuwait where @RCAF\_ARC stages our sorties against ISIS. Proud of @CanadianForces personnel!

*This is a retweet of Minister Jason Kenney's tweet about being proud of the RCAF's work against ISIS.*

@RCN\_MRC - 571701654946365441 - Sat Feb 28 16:01:10 2015 - RT @jkenney: Impressive Guard of Honour at CFB #Esquimalt. Proud of the men and women of the Royal Canadian Navy @RCN\_MRC. #Navy

*This is a retweet of Minister Jason Kenney's tweet about his experience of the Guard of Honour at CFB Esquimalt.*



@CanadianForces - 581614588682231808 - Sat Mar 28 00:31:38 2015 - RT @jkenney: #FF: Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (@PPCLI100), serving Canada with duty and loyalty since 1914.

*This is a retweet of Minister Jason Kenney's tweet congratulating the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry regiment on its centenary.*

The main purpose of the historical tweets appears to be to root the organization firmly into Canadian society. As Scheipers (2014) pointed out, the professionalization of the military can work to disembed and distance the organization from its society of origin. The creation of an organizational identity and culture separate from the mainstream can alienate the organization. Kasurak (2013), for instance, argues that the Canadian military clung to its British heritage and culture that it had descended from for a long time, and it was, at least in some part, the cause of the military's isolation from its parent society of Canada and its distinctly Canadian values. Such lack of identification with Canada led to the military not following the Canadian government's directions and destabilizing the civil-military relations (ibid.). In some ways then, the recounting of its historic and current operations can be seen as an attempt by CAF to root themselves into Canadian society not only for the sake of the public, but also for the sake of its own identity as an organization and for its personnel. The remembrance of battles such as the Battle of Britain establish the organization's success as well as its short but prominent history of fighting under the Canadian flag. So, CAF's organizational identity building through strategic communication and the use of strategic narratives is about emphasizing the Canadianness of CAF and the hawkishness of Canada.

### Theme 3: Preparedness

CAF Twitter feeds generate a storyline of constant work to be prepared mainly to defend Canada and Canadians in a variety of domestic and international scenarios emerging from political conditions or natural catastrophes. CAF also extends its expertise in war making, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid provision to allies and other states around the world as needed, so there is training conducted for those purposes as well. The military is one of the few organizations that must prepare constantly because the chances of their deployment to fight wars might be few and far between. While fewer wars are generally accepted to be a good thing for the stability of societies, the lack of wars means less opportunity for the military to perform the task for which it has been created. Further, the unpredictability of war and conflict means that the military, despite a general atmosphere of peace, must be prepared to act immediately in case conflict does break out. Training, therefore, forms the basic work of the military in the absence of wars to fight. Training can generally be categorized into four main categories — training for combat, training for peacekeeping, and training for non-combat operations.

@RCN\_MRC - 344903183916748800 - Wed Jun 12 19:45:01 2013 - Canadian Warships Depart for Coastal Operations and Training Exercises in the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes <http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/-1801190.htm>

*This is a tweet about the RCN training in various parts of Canada. A link to the press release is provided in the tweet.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 555312737438679041 - Wed Jan 14 10:37:28 2015 - RT @TomPodolec: Nice pics @RCAF\_ARC MT @LoomexGroup: Love when #424sqdn pops into @PtboAirport @CanadianForces #SARtech #training

*This is a re-tweet of a journalist's tweet about the Search and Rescue technicians training in Peterborough at the Peterborough Airport.*

@CanadianArmy - 269787029234122752 - Sat Nov 17 13:00:14 2012 - Ready for anything: military members train against a robust enemy. <http://ow.ly/fm5zN> #Army #Train2Excite #Training

*This is a tweet about the Army training as part of Exercise MAPLE RESOLVE. The link in the tweet leads to a YouTube video about the training.*

These tweets are about CAF training within Canada. Sometimes these training opportunities are combined with public engagement. For instance, the press release to which the first tweet provides a link mentions that the warships will anchor at six ports of call where members of the public would have the opportunity to visit the ships and meet the crews. The tweet then is an online indirect communication with the public that shares information about other opportunities for direct face-to-face public-military interaction. These domestic training opportunities are often matched with a large number of international training opportunities with Allies and other countries.

@CanadianForces - 590536820267601922 - Tue Apr 21 15:25:24 2015 - HMCS #FREDERICTON crewmembers prepares for ship replenishment as part of #ExJOINTWARRIOR, during #OpREASSURANCE. <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CDICF0sUkAA-Qxh.jpg>

*This is a tweet about the crew of HMCS Fredericton training as part of Exercise JOINT WARRIOR while it is in Europe as part of Operation REASSURANCE, contributing to NATO assurance and deterrence measures.*

@CanadianArmy - 370191567363244032 - Wed Aug 21 14:32:02 2013 - RT @CFOperations: #photo: taking aim with the Para-flare during joint coalition weapons training in #Kabul during #OpATTENTION.

*This is a re-tweet that shares an image from a weapons training exercise where Canada was training the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Air Force, and the Afghan National Police as part of NATO Training Mission–Afghanistan. The Canadian contribution was called Operation ATTENTION.*

@RCN\_MRC - 485148472920662016 - Fri Jul 04 19:49:44 2014 - RT @CFOperations  
Chaplain Elisabeth Duggan checks in with #3PPCLI during training at Kaneohe Bay  
#RIMPAC2014 #selfie <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/BruX9wECIAAdrMg.jpg>

*This is a retweet about Military Chaplain Duggan checking with personnel from the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry during training for the annual multinational joint exercise, Exercise RIMPAC. Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) is the largest international maritime exercise in the world because all nations with an interest in the Pacific Rim region participate (Department of National Defence Canada 2014).*

@RCAF\_ARC - 580805472472711168 - Wed Mar 25 18:56:30 2015 - A CH-149  
#Cormorant #helicopter training in Lima #Peru during #Cooperación2014  
<http://on.fb.me/1Oz15rG> #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CA9vf9oUYAAi13C.jpg>

*This is a tweet about the RCAF participating in helicopter training as part of Exercise COOPERACIÓN in 2014 in Peru.*

Because of how closely Canada works with the US on continental defence, there are numerous tweets about the two militaries training together. The second most common training partners for CAF is its NATO allies.

@CanadianForces - 603633600471367681 - Wed May 27 18:47:19 2015 - RT  
@CanadaNATO: Landing in Nunavut. Canada & #US training in #Canada's North & High Arctic - Ex AMALGAM DART <http://www.rcaf-arc.forces.gc.ca/en/article-template-standard.page?doc=canadian-norad-region-to-lead-bi-national-exercise-in-the-north-and-high-arctic/i9se1oa3>

*This is a retweet about CAF training with the US military in the Arctic with a link to an article about the training.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 639485149009219584 - Thu Sep 03 17:08:35 2015 - Canadian paratroopers jump from a CC-177 during #EXALLIEDSPIRITII, Germany. #OpREASSURANCE #readiness #RCAF <https://amp.twimg.com/v/ea49d36b-265c-41ba-a37c-c2075e00a32e>

*This is a tweet about Canadian military personnel training with Allies in Germany.*

The frequency of the Allied training tweets could also be a result of how often the @CanadaNATO account tweets about Canada either training with or being on active operations

with other NATO countries. Nonetheless, the number of US and NATO related tweets is an indicator of Canada's status as a middle power that is most effective in conjunction with other states, especially in matters of security and defense.

While combat operations are the primary task of a military, CAF is involved in non-combat operations as well, so not all training is related to combat operations. Personnel train for search and rescue operations, for aid delivery related to providing humanitarian assistance, for operations preventing illegal trafficking, etc. CAF helps train allied militaries in non-war operations too.

@RCAF\_ARC - 615173213593726976 - Sun Jun 28 15:01:38 2015 - Exciting video from @JTFAtlantic of intense Boat Camp #SAR #Training: <http://bit.ly/1eKi5Ou> #RCAF #ThatOthersMayLive

*This a tweet sharing a video from CAF's search and rescue training.*

@CanadianArmy - 613703251238756352 - Wed Jun 24 13:40:31 2015 - #CAF members are participating in humanitarian and civic action focused exercise #KHAANQUEST in Mongolia. #KQ15 <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CIRP2rnWcAAkhxL.jpg>

*This a tweet sharing about CAF personnel training in an international training exercise related to humanitarian action.*

@CanadianForces - 614231550868254720 - Fri Jun 26 00:39:48 2015 - RT @CFOperations: The enhanced naval boarding party team practice small arms on the flight deck of #HMCSWINNIPEG during #OpCARIBBE <http://t...>

*This is retweet about CAF personnel practicing the skills they would need to prevent illegal drug trafficking during an ongoing operation to prevent drug trafficking, Operation CARIBBE.*

@CanadianForces - 570298418725322754 - Tue Feb 24 19:05:13 2015 - Disaster Assistance Response Team members prepare for a road move during #ExREADYRENAISSANCE2015. <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-obY7zW4AAbeNC.jpg>

*This is CAF tweeting about its disaster response team training other countries' by sharing its own experiences with disaster response and humanitarian aid provision.*

CAF also helps teach or train allies in matters of combat, disaster relief, aid provision, etc. For instance, part of Operation REASSURANCE in Ukraine is CAF personnel training Ukrainian military personnel and sharing their knowledge and experiences of combat operations likely to ensure that the Ukrainian military is aware of the Allied way of combat and rules of engagement in war (see tweet about Operation UNIFIER below). This is different from training *with* allies because CAF is in a different position: their role is more focused on imparting knowledge instead of learning new skills together. This is not to say that CAF personnel do not learn from the allies who are being taught; they probably do, but the focus of the operation and often of the tweet is on CAF imparting and sharing its own knowledge and experiences, which also builds the credibility and legitimacy of the Canadian military as an experienced and capable military.

Often these teaching operations are combined with training or other active operations such as CAF teaching Ukrainian military personnel as part of Operation UNIFIER which parallels Operation REASSURANCE, Canada's commitment to NATO's assurance and deterrence measures in Central and Eastern Europe, or teaching casualty care to a Nepalese medical team as part of Operation RENAISSANCE 15-1, Canada's military disaster relief efforts after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. CAF personnel teaching others gives the impression that CAF and CAF personnel are knowledgeable, competent, and/or experienced enough to be teaching other militaries.

@CanadianForces - 602822253101916163 - Mon May 25 13:03:19 2015 - A #CAF Medical Technician teaches casualty care to the Nepalese Forward Medical Team in Kathmandu. #Nepal <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CF2npSbW0AAJAto.jpg>

*This is a tweet about a CAF medical technician teaching casualty care to the Nepalese Forward Medical Team in Kathmandu as part of Canada's relief operation in Nepal after the 2015 earthquake.*

@CanadianArmy - 515555921112866817 - Fri Sep 26 17:38:04 2014 - #FactFriday CA C-IED instructors from @5CdnDiv 4ESR train soldiers of participating nations at #ExRAPIDTRIDENT2014 [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/ByefX\\_YCMAAyWNn.png](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/ByefX_YCMAAyWNn.png)

*This is a tweet about Canadian instructors from 4 Engineer Support Regiment (5th Canadian Division) teaching Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) techniques to personnel from other nations participating in Exercise RAPID TRIDENT in 2014 (Canadian Military Engineers Association 2014).*

@RCAF\_ARC - 636981323354251268 - Thu Aug 27 19:19:16 2015 - RT @CFOperations: #CAF personnel arrive in Ukraine to commence #OpUNIFIER, Canada's military training mission to Ukraine <http://t.co/y41uX4...>

*This is a retweet about Operation UNIFIER under which CAF personnel are training Ukrainian armed forces personnel to help build their military capacity.*

As expected there are a large number of tweets related to the various exercises and other training operations that CAF engages in either at home in various Canadian provinces and territories or in different places around the world with other states' militaries. There are numerous bilateral exercises with the US because of how closely the national defence of the countries is aligned, but Canada participates in bilateral training with other allies as well, often under the auspices of NATO. CAF is also part of large-scale NATO exercises that have militaries from multiple countries training together. While the guiding factor of training closely with its partners has largely to do with the practical matter of interoperability, the tweets may also work to enhance Canada's alliances with other states from a soft power perspective.

The constant training is, of course, part of all military organizations as a means of learning new skills and retaining learned skills. Ongoing skill learning and testing allows the military personnel and the organizational units such as regiments, brigades, divisions, wings, and ships to be constantly ready for deployment. As Clausewitz (1832 as cited in Clausewitz, Howard, and Paret 1989, 292) notes, "The order of battle consists of an arithmetical and a

geometrical component: organization and disposition. The former emanates from the army's normal organization in *peacetime*; certain parts, such as battalions, squadrons, regiments, and batteries, are treated as units that serve as building-blocks for larger structures, which in turn form the whole, depending on the requirements of the moment. Similarly, the army's disposition starts from the basic tactics in which it has been instructed and *trained in time of peace* — characteristics not susceptible to basic change once war has broken out" [emphasis added]. As Clausewitz makes clear, what the military does in wartime or in other emergency operations is rooted in the practice and routinization of behaviours and processes in peacetime. Training is, therefore, a vital part of the military organization.

With social media, CAF can share the work that it does every day in order to fulfill their role as the national military force, even if that sharing is occasionally time delayed likely because of approval mechanisms within the organization or operational security reasons or both. There is a sense of transparency and accountability insofar as the public, should it choose to do so, can find out what some military units are doing on some days. The training tweets also work to establish the credibility and legitimacy of CAF as the most practically experienced actors on the subject of national security. The tweets also increase the visibility of CAF. If CAF only tweeted about actual operations, then there would be a lot fewer tweets and other social media posts for the public to see. Tweets do not provide as thorough an account of the organization as an annual report, but the sharing of the everyday work acts to keep the military transparent and accountable while also supporting government strategic narratives.



## Theme 4: Partnership

Canada occupies a relevant position in international security for a variety of reasons including its neighbour, the United States; its strategically important geographic location between the United States and Russia; its colonial past and ongoing ties<sup>19</sup> with the UK; and its desire to bring its weight as a middle power to bear in the international arena. Many Canadians see themselves as citizens of the world (Kymlicka and Walker 2012; Kymlicka 2003). As former Canadian ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations, Paul Heinbecker writes, “Canadians are moved by humanitarian impulse, not by the cold-blooded or rational calculations of realpolitik ... Principles are often more important than power to Canadians” (as cited in Nossal 2010, 108). Canada has, however, not been free of the impulse of nationalism reflected in episodes of nationalistic and/or anti-globalization movements, most recent of which we can see now in light of Brexit, the Trump presidency, and other right and far right movements in Europe and elsewhere (Kellogg 2017).

The Canadian perception of and desire for status on the world stage holds true in a variety of spaces of international relations and global governance (see, for instance, James, Michaud, and O’Reilly 2006; Nossal, Roussel, and Paquin 2015). In the matter of national security, Canada initially followed the lead of the UK because of its close ties to Britain as an ex-colony and a constitutional monarchy. Post-World War II and with the emergence of the

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<sup>19</sup> Canada, while closer to the US geographically and perhaps even socioculturally, is still associated with the UK in many ways. Canada is a constitutional monarchy where Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is Canada’s Head of State and represented by the Governor General in Canada. Two branches of the Canadian Armed Forces carry the word royal in their name — Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force. Some CAF regiments either have the word royal in their name or are named after British royalty such as the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry and the King’s Own Calgary Regiment. Several Canadian regiments have royal colonels-in-chief. For instance, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the colonel-in-chief of the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, His Royal Highness Prince Philip is the colonel-in-chief of the Royal Canadian Regiment, and His Royal Highness Prince Charles is the colonel-in-chief of the Royal Canadian Dragoons. Regulations and orders for CAF are called the Queen’s Regulations and Orders [QR&Os]. Canada is also part of the Commonwealth of Nations, which is a voluntary international association of sovereign states that were mostly former British colonies.

Cold War, Canada followed the lead of the US in matters of defence due to the chance of geography and the intention of partnership. The latter is reflected in organizations, agreements, and plans such as the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, the Military Cooperation Committee, the North American Aerospace Defense Command, the Combined Defence Plan, the Tri-Command Framework, and the Canada-US Civil Assistance Plan.

Because of its deep relationships with the United States and Britain, Canada has played an important role in international security. Canada's relationship with UK and US is filled with "the complexities of the relationship between a smaller, sometimes insecure, but nonetheless significant nation, and mostly benevolent superpowers, closely related but different, well-disposed but often overbearing and patronizing: never enemies, not always friendly either; more like family, with a history; uncles indeed, close and powerful uncles. ... literally in the middle of those powers, cuddling them, helping them, leveraging one, challenging the other, at times bridging them too" (Daudelin 2009, 3). Due in large part to its relationships with the US and UK, Canada has been involved in both the World Wars and many others from Paardeberg to Kapyong.

Canada is located in a way that war has rarely touched it, so CAF has often been sent to engage in international missions organized in conjunction with other countries: "Unlike the great powers, which use their armed forces to *directly* promote or defend their interests, the Canadian government has always used CAF beyond Canada's borders as an *indirect* instrument of foreign policy: to defend or maintain a particular international order, and thus indirectly the security of Canada. It is for this reason that CAF has always been used overseas in a *multilateral context*" [original emphasis] (Nossal, Roussel, and Paquin 2015, 74). Like major/great powers, Canada is interested in maintaining the status quo because the current

international order is favourable to its interests. This has translated to CAF always engaging in operations partnered with militaries from other states, often as part of UN or NATO missions.

Canada's contributions to international security are noted above in the Preparedness theme, where tweets show how frequently Canada participates in joint exercises and other training for combat operations as well as for non-combat operations such as humanitarian aid provision and search and rescue operations. The History theme also notes Canada's contributions to US and British war efforts, such as fighting alongside the Allies in World War II as well as contributing troops to the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in former Yugoslavia. In this, the Partnership section, therefore, I will not share too many tweets about international partnerships because the tweets shared under the History and Preparedness themes clearly make the point about how much Canada relies on and supports the major powers and the international institutions.

The major partnerships that I will discuss in this section are domestic partnerships. While the military is understood by most to be an outward-facing organization insofar as its main task is to defend against external threats to the state, there are numerous domestic relationships that CAF nurtures. Some of the main domestic partners of CAF are other government departments and agencies, individuals, private actors, Non-Governmental Organizations, the news and other media. They are members of the public that partner with CAF in a personal capacity such as prominent community members who become Honorary Colonels, or they are organizations that partner with CAF in a professional capacity such as Parks Canada that coordinates Operation PALACI with CAF to prevent avalanches in Rogers Pass.

There are also partnerships that straddle the line of personal and professional such as sports teams such as the Ottawa Senators, an ice hockey team, that hold CAF appreciation nights or other events to support CAF. Sports are a business insofar as one of the aims of the teams is to sell seats and gain profits, but they also have a personal connection for the players and many members of their fans and audiences. When sports teams partner with CAF, there is a strong emotional component to the events because of the combined impact of the team cheering sentiment with the “support our troops” sentiment.

The public-government-military relationship exists within the norms of civil-military relations theory insofar as the military is not attempting to incite the public against the government or building fertile ground for a coup d'état. Rather, the military is likely working to become more visible in public spaces to gather support for the government's strategic narratives, particularly those that involve the military, and to boost recruitment. The phenomenon of strategic communication via partnerships — domestic and international — is worth studying because of what it means for CAF as an organization as well as for CAF's promotion of the government's strategic narrative among its public.

#### ***4.1 International Partnerships***

The mentions of partnership in most of the tweets are about Canada “standing with” or providing support to its partners in Europe and other conflict areas.

@CanadianForces - 590629922865078273 - Tue Apr 21 21:35:21 2015 - Standing with our allies against the threat of ISIS #Budget2015 #OpIMPACT <http://ow.ly/LVPNX>

*This is a tweet about how CAF and Canada stand with our allies in the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria in the form of Operation IMPACT. The link connects to a page that lists how the Harper government is shaping the budget to increase Canada's security, part of which is better funding for CAF.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 586558281822396416 - Fri Apr 10 15:56:06 2015 - Welcome to 5 Wing: Supporting #NORAD operations for the projection of air power: <http://bit.ly/1HZyvuS> #RCAF <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CCPfpMcVEAQbwzn.jpg>

*This is a tweet about 5 Wing, a Canadian Forces Base, located in Goose Bay. It supports NORAD operations by protecting North American airspace and providing other assistance as needed. The link in the tweet leads to a detailed article about 5 Wing.*

@CanadianArmy - 446674173981507585 - Thu Mar 20 15:46:36 2014 - 300+ VanDoos are in #Norway, working with a Norwegian mechanized infantry coy: <http://bit.ly/PTV3bM> #ColdResponse @lmhovtun @Sjoforsvaret

*This is a tweet about over three hundred members of the Royal 22e Régiment (Vandoos is a nickname) working with a Norwegian mechanized infantry company as part of Exercise COLD RESPONSE, a multinational cold-weather combat exercise.*

What is not mentioned is that Canada can only stand in partnership, that is, the Canadian military organization would be not be effective for long outside of a partnership relationship on the international stage not only because of limited military capabilities, but also because the domestic public would likely not support a foreign war for long. As Saideman and Hampson (2015, 8) note, “The Canadian public has rarely been warmly disposed or strongly opposed to these overseas military engagements and public support has been lukewarm at best.” For instance, Boucher and Nossal (2017, 192) note that the public’s support for the Canadian engagement in Afghanistan “always remained tepid.” Public ambivalence gives politicians and other decisionmakers leeway in policymaking, but there are limits. For instance, Canada did not participate in the 2003 US war in Iraq because the public would not have supported it (Saideman and Hampson 2015). Thus, public opinion can also constrain the government.

The “standing with” phrasing might mislead some to think that the Canada and its military are strong enough to make their own stand in international security and only lending a hand because the other country’s military needs help. This might be an extreme interpretation,

but it is one that might be worth considering. While militaries of other states do/might need help, Canada's status as a military and political power — as a middle power on the international stage — is such that Canada would ideally need to provide that support in collaboration with other allies, often through NATO. Canada cannot support Romania and/or Ukraine unless bigger powers like the US, UK, etc., allied organizations like NATO, and/or international organizations like the UN create the space for the Canadian military to step up.

The budget tweets, previously mentioned in the Equipment section, can also be reaching CAF's allies such as NATO and other bilateral partners. Infrastructure and equipment investment would surely be seen as CAF's attempt to pull more of their own weight in joint operations. Certainly, Canada has always been an active ally that has often punched above its weight militarily, but CAF has experienced shrinking budgets over the past several decades, in some cases even in light of expanding operations. As a NATO member, Canada should ideally be meeting the target set for NATO countries to spend at least two per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence. NATO member states adopted the goal of increasing their defence spending to at least two per cent of the GDP in 2006,<sup>20</sup> and in 2014, they agreed to reach the two per cent goal by 2024 (North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] 2014, 2018). Canada has consistently been under two per cent since 1988. Since 1996, however, Canada has averaged one per cent or a little higher of the GDP, but never touched even the 1.5 per cent mark, let alone the two per cent suggested target (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2017).

While Canada is part of the majority at NATO with respect to underspending on defence, this consistent underspending becomes glaringly noticeable in light of Canada's shift to a more assertive strategic narrative. The underspending has also become obvious recently in

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<sup>20</sup> Mölling (2014) argues that the two per cent agreement was reached in 2002.

aging equipment that is increasingly becoming beyond repair. The RCN has had to rent ships from other countries and retrofit commercial ships in order to continue participating in operations (Campion-Smith 2015; Pugliese 2015; Taylor 2016). Thus, even if the primary target of CAF's budget information were Canadians, it is possible that the allied militaries that follow CAF Twitter accounts might also be relieved to see CAF receiving funds for much needed improvements.<sup>21</sup>

#### ***4.2 Domestic Partnerships***

While international partnerships are what allow Canada and its military to have an impact on the international stage, CAF's partnerships with domestic actors such as alliances with different parts of the military and the government as well as business persons and community organizations also plays a role in establishing CAF's organizational identity and furthering their strategic messaging among their imagined public(s).

##### ***4.2.1 Within Government Partnerships***

CAF engages in partnerships with various departments and entities within the government. While these tweets could be read as military-military or civil-military relations tweets, the fact that they are shared via social media to show how the military branches work together or with other departments makes them about putting a united face forward on government messaging, thereby supporting the government narrative. This display of collegiality reflects well on the organizations and/or departments mentioned, and it also shows

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<sup>21</sup> Allies, of course, would not need to rely on social media because they would have other sources of information such as NATO's Defence Policy and Planning Committee.

that the military serves the public through its domestic collaborations just as much as it does with its multinational missions.

#### 4.2.1.1 Inter-service Partnerships

There are tweets about the RCAF, RCN, and the Canadian Army working together and occasionally having fun together. Most militaries experience some level of inter-service rivalry in part because the services — air force, navy, and army — are often competing for allocations in the budget. Of course, some of the rivalry is more in jest and rests upon each service's assumption that it is the better of the three. For instance, the army might jest about how it is the best service, while the navy and air force might counter that with their respective claims to being the best of the three.

@CanadianArmy - 407893557937451008 - Tue Dec 03 15:26:17 2013 - .@rcaf\_arc  
Welcome to Twitter!

*This is a tweet from the Canadian Army welcoming the RCAF to Twitter when the air force joined the social media platform.*

@CanadianArmy - 579282300011180032 - Sat Mar 21 14:03:57 2015 - RT @3CdnDiv:  
@RCAF\_ARC Thanks for the lift. We'll take it from here! @CanadianArmy  
@CanadianForces [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CAInL\\_hUQAAOidh.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CAInL_hUQAAOidh.jpg)

*This tweet is best explained by the associated image of Canadian Army personnel parachuting to ground as a RCAF plane appears to be flying away in the backdrop. The army relies on the RCAF to give it a "lift" to particular locations, where the army can then take over operations.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 553235348638404609 - Thu Jan 08 17:02:40 2015 - Who says the  
@CanadianArmy & the #RCAF can't get along? Check out this video from Ex Pegasus  
Spear '12! <http://ow.ly/FRuEy> #Parachute

*This tweet makes light of the inter-service rivalry by implying that the army and air force do get along. The tweet also links to a YouTube video that shows Canadian Army and RCAF personnel planning a training para jump, and later army personnel jumping out of an RCAF plane.*



*Similar to the tweet above, this tweet is about how the army and air force work together in training, and by implication, in the defence of the state.*

@RCN\_MRC - 645679293360701440 - Sun Sep 20 19:21:54 2015 - SONAR,  
@RCN\_MRC mascot, joins Juno, @CanadianArmy mascot, for the first time  
@CanadaArmyRun!! #ArmyRun <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CPXp41uVEAA3fvY.jpg>

*On an even lighter note, the Canadian Army and RCN mascots, Juno and Sonar, are seen together at the Canada Army Run, an annual event that raises funds to aid ill and injured soldiers and military families in need.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 567347033955389440 - Mon Feb 16 15:37:28 2015 - EX ARCTIC  
BISON is held along Lake Winnipeg, 13-22 Feb. Learn more about it from 38 Brigade on their FB page: <http://on.fb.me/1EgNbUz>

*The RCAF shares the Facebook page of the 38th Canadian Brigade Group to share information and/or images from their training exercise in the Arctic. The brigade is an army formation, not an air force one, so this is a further example of the collegiality that the different services show on social media.*

These inter-service tweets are few in number, but they do show that the organization stands together because of the interdependence between different environments. The Canadian Army personnel, for instance, might not be able to practice their parachute jumps without the RCAF flying them up. These tweets reflect on the inter-service rivalry that exists among the three services; however, they also show that all three services work to present a united communication front on social media.

#### 4.2.1.2 Inter-departmental partnerships

CAF Twitter accounts often tweet at and retweet other government departments. I have accounted for retweets from ministers, even if they are from the Minister of National Defence, as inter-departmental because they are not members of CAF. Ministers are civilians or ex-service persons in charge of the civilian Department of National Defence, and even though their decision-making affects CAF, they are not technically CAF themselves.

@RCAF\_ARC - 595024565362823168 - Mon May 04 00:38:06 2015 - RT @jkenney: Great day at 2 airbases in Kuwait where @RCAF\_ARC stages our sorties against ISIS. Proud of @CanadianForces personnel! <http://t...>

*This is a retweet from the then Minister of National Defence, Jason Kenney, speaking of this visit to Kuwaiti air bases from where the RCAF flies its sorties against ISIS as part of Operation IMPACT.*

@CanadianArmy - 348086240387665922 - Fri Jun 21 14:33:21 2013 - RT @MinPeterMacKay: Last night @CanadianForces rescued 31 people stranded due to #Alberta floods. Our #CAF continue to assist efforts on the ground. #cdnpoli

*This is a retweet from the then Minister of National Defence, PeterMacKay, about CAF's efforts to provide disaster relief during the floods in Alberta in 2013. The hashtags refer to Alberta (#Alberta), the province that was experiencing the floods (#Alberta); the Canadian Armed Forces (#CAF), the Canadian military that was involved in disaster relief; and Canadian politics, which is commonly used when tweeting about Canadian politics (#cdnpoli).*

@CanadianForces - 563772148175863809 - Fri Feb 06 18:52:09 2015 - RT @HonRobNicholson: Hybrid warfare first up on our discussions at #MSC2015, #Russia should back off #Ukraine

*This is retweet from the then Minister of National Defence, Rob Nicholson, where he mentions that hybrid warfare would be the first matter of discussion at the 2015 Munich Security Conference (indicated by the hashtag #MSC2015). The message for Russia to back off from Ukraine is a deeply political one.*

CAF retweets the MND's tweets fairly frequently. This is probably because many of the Minister's tweets are relevant to CAF or are talking directly about CAF, as the first two tweets above show. The final tweet is an interesting retweet because it comes with a political message. On the one hand, it could be argued that CAF retweeted this along with the other retweets of the minister's tweets from the Munich Security Conference. On the other hand, it is interesting to see a political retweet from CAF, when it otherwise stays away from explicitly political tweets and retweets.

The political retweet above might be simply an outlier or an accident beyond which CAF returned to its apolitical tweets. The Canada at NATO Twitter account, on the other hand, often retweets politically oriented tweets (see below). CAF does not retweet agonistically political tweets, at least not in the period where I collected my dataset of tweets.

@CanadaNATO - 588666346344419329 - Thu Apr 16 11:32:48 2015 - RT @NataliaAntonova: #Putin in a nutshell: "I took Crimea, re-wrote some borders, so what? Calm down, Ukraine. Get a hobby."

*This is Canada at NATO retweeting a tweet from @NataliaAntonova, which describes Russian actions in Ukraine in a sarcastic tone. CAF did not retweet this tweet.*

@CanadaNATO - 588782645733158914 - Thu Apr 16 19:14:56 2015 - #Russia continues to be surprised that threatening its neighbours annoys them.  
<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/finlands-diplomatic-balancing-act-with-russia-comes-under-scrutiny/519200.html> via @MoscowTimes

*This is a direct tweet from Canada at NATO speaking in a mocking tone about Russian reaction to Finland's diplomatic concerns following Russian activity in Ukraine and the Baltic Sea. CAF would likely not post something that takes such a political stance.*

Beyond retweeting the odd political tweet from the MND, CAF accounts retweet a fair number of tweets from other government departments and agencies such as Global Affairs Canada (previously the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development), Canadian Space Agency, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada as well.

@CanadianForces - 594574255188287488 - Sat May 02 18:48:43 2015 - RT @DFATD\_DEV: Canada Increases Humanitarian Assistance for Those Affected by Earthquake in #Nepal <http://owl.li/MqBKV> #UN #NepalQuake

*This is a retweet of Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development's original tweet about increasing aid to Nepal after the 2015 earthquake. CAF was in Nepal providing disaster relief.*

@RCAF\_ARC - 570347820818890753 - Tue Feb 24 22:21:31 2015 - MT from @csa\_asc on #NatlAvDay: @Astro\_Jeremy and @Astro\_DavidS conquer sky before going to space

#RCAF #Avgeek <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-pIUgmUsAEJWmq.jpg>

*This is a modified tweet (MT) shared by the RCAF from the Canadian Space Agency that talks about its two astronauts, one of whom was previously a RCAF fighter pilot. The first hashtag refers to the RCAF (#RCAF), and the second is a reference to aviation geeks (#Avgeek) that might be interested in the RCAF and/or astronauts and/or space.*

@CanadianForces - 673931437830184960 - Mon Dec 07 18:25:50 2015 - RT  
@CitImmCanada: Dedicated visa offices are temporarily established as we  
#WelcomeRefugees. Learn more: <http://ow.ly/VgP9E>

*This is a retweet of a Citizenship and Immigration Canada tweet about the efforts made to accommodate the arrival of Syrian refugees, such as the establishment of temporary visa offices for the refugees. The hashtag is to welcome the refugees to Canada (#WelcomeRefugees).*

Such inter-departmental retweeting presents a unified image of the Government of Canada and reiterates the fact that CAF works for the government and with the various other departments that are part of the government. Such tweets, even though they are few in number, also hint at how the relationship between CAF and the Canadian government is based on Huntington's ideal of civil-military relations insofar as the civilian government controls the military's actions and communication. There is, however, also a sense of camaraderie between the departments as they often appear to collaborate to resolve situations such as the Government of Canada's decision to assist with the Syrian refugee crisis or assist during natural disasters. These tweets present a united front with respect to both the joint tasks and the strategic communication about them.

#### *4.2.2 Partnerships with Individuals and Private Actors*

There are some tweets that highlight CAF's partnerships with individuals and private sector actors such as business people. These partnerships can serve a variety of purposes. There are civilians who are awarded honorary ranks within the army, navy, or air force, and they usually act as ambassadors for the armed forces to the public.

@RCAF\_ARC - 558729545659199489 - Fri Jan 23 20:54:39 2015 - Loreena McKennitt formally invested as honorary colonel of the #RCAF. Story: <http://bit.ly/1y9pWGE> #HCol #aviation [http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B8EBj4\\_CcAEw7o2.jpg](http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B8EBj4_CcAEw7o2.jpg)

*This is a tweet about the investiture of Loreena McKennitt, a Canadian musician, as an honorary colonel of the RCAF. The link in the tweet leads to a story about the appointment on RCAF's forces.gc.ca site. The hashtag #HCol is an abbreviation of honorary colonel and #aviation refers to the business of the RCAF.*

@RCN\_MRC - 547136783008690176 - Mon Dec 22 21:09:09 2014 - RT @Comd\_RCN: With @RCN\_MRC HCapt @markrmcqueen and Capt Cal Bricker @ROMtoronto for Franklin dinner hosted by HCapt Jim Balsillie <http://...>

*This is a tweet about an event organized by Canadian businessperson and RCN Honorary Captain Jim Balsillie at the Royal Ontario Museum, most likely to celebrate the finding of the HMS Erebus of the Franklin expedition.*

@CanadianArmy - 333202215646945281 - Sat May 11 12:49:33 2013 - Exec Council of #Army Honorary Colonels meeting today. HCols key to #Reserve support and bridging military and civilian communities.

*This is a tweet about how Honorary Colonels, who act in an advisory role to the commanding officer, are an important part of CAF.*

The honorary appointees connect the military to the public in a variety of ways, thereby furthering the reach of the military's strategic communication. The honorary appointees in the first two tweets noted above are both prominent members of the public. Because of their name and occasionally, fame, they can play a role in bringing the military closer to the public by using their influence networks to bring the latter's attention to military issues. The honorary appointees sometimes provide support to CAF at public events as well. They play the role of advisors to the commanding officer of the unit to which they are honorary appointees, particularly on the matter of public-military interactions.

@RCN\_MRC - 645948526892085248 - Mon Sep 21 13:11:44 2015 - RT @Nphillips26: Our partner in Norfolk tonight is HMCS Halifax as our namesake ship hosts an event onboard for business and military @greatbigseas #Halifax

*This is a retweet from an individual about an event held onboard the HMCS Halifax by the RCN for business persons and military personnel. The hashtag refers to the city of Halifax and probably to the ship as well. The @greatbigseas reference is to Rear-Admiral John Newton, Commander of Maritime Forces Atlantic and Joint Task Force Atlantic, as he is possibly one of the hosts, if not the host, of the event.*

@CanadianArmy - 294872932017139712 - Fri Jan 25 18:22:40 2013 - RT @Army\_Comd: Spoke about “The Army Today” in front of the RCMI last night. Great opportunity to reach out to Army and Business leaders

*This is a retweet of the Army Commander’s tweet about his talk on “The Army Today” in front of the Royal Canadian Military Institute as an opportunity to reach out to army and business leaders. It is unclear what the business connection is here.*

As the tweets above show, the military attempts to build good relations with prominent public individuals as well as businesses. The connection with businesses might go deeper than simply attempting to further government strategic narratives, but the tweets do not provide details on the importance of businesses to CAF. There is not enough here for even speculation, so I will assume that business-military relationship building has a side effect of building public-military relations as the military gets opportunities to communicate with the public that the businesses and business leaders might bring to the military.

#### *4.2.3 Partnerships with Media*

While this may not count exactly as a partnership, CAF does have a relationship with news and entertainment media organizations. The relationship with news media is largely, and perhaps as expected, a fairly balanced one with the news organizations reporting on the military as needed and attempting to do so from an objective perspective. Some journalists have written books about the Canadian military’s experiences after being embedded with the troops in the

field, and those recountings tend to have a more sympathetic take on the military. The entertainment media also tend to take a slightly more congenial view of the military than news media because entertainment media are often engaging in the military stories at a more interpersonal level, and the development of empathy in interpersonal interactions is to be expected.

#### 4.2.3.1 News Media

The media act as neutral and unbiased — as much as possible — observers and reporters of CAF’s work. CAF accounts do link to media coverage of CAF stories, both official events and unofficial occurrences:

@RCAF\_ARC - 577251253627027456 - Sun Mar 15 23:33:18 2015 - RT @CTVNews:  
After 70 years, Canadian war veteran finally receives his service medals  
<http://ow.ly/KmBxm> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CALNIVIWEAAivR0.jpg>

*This is a retweet of a CTV story about a CAF veteran finally receive medals he had earned during World War II.*

@CanadianForces - 605726817677385728 - Tue Jun 02 13:25:01 2015 - RT  
@CanadaNATO: #NORAD: #US F-15C Eagles in Canada during Exercise AMALGAM  
DART on May 27, 2015. More info: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/norad-jets-train-in-arctic-as-russian-flights-close-to-north-america-increase-1.3091799> <http://t...>

*This is a retweet of Canada at NATO’s tweet of CBC’s story about a joint training exercise in the Canadian Arctic after an increase in the number of Russian jets flying close to North American air space.*

In extremely rare cases, CAF tweets about potential errors in reporting as well in order to ensure the public has the correct information. I only found this one tweet in my dataset of over 14,000 tweets, so it appears that the news media are reliable in getting the details right in their defence and security coverage.

@RCN\_MRC - 357483354863579137 - Wed Jul 17 12:54:08 2013 - This CBC story unfortunately misleading. Refers to a prelim assessment. No damage to pressure hull. All repairable. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/story/2013/07/16/ns-navy-submarine-damage-hmcs-corner-brook.html>

*The RCN tweets about the error in a CBC news story.*

@CanadianArmy - 619591656950628353 - Fri Jul 10 19:38:57 2015 - RT @TorontoStar: @CanadianForces troops are trading camo for jumpsuits to fight forest fires in Saskatchewan. <http://on.thestar.com/1Gao7xg> <http://>...

*The Canadian Army retweets the Toronto Star story about CAF personnel fighting wildfire in Saskatchewan.*

@CanadianArmy - 671522921878265856 - Tue Dec 01 02:55:15 2015 - From @CTVNews: Knitters wanted: Group seeks 'Izzy Dolls' for Syrian refugee children: <http://ow.ly/Vi4d2> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/CVG6ig1UsAAJX3f.jpg>

*The Canadian Army retweets a CTV news story about a slain CAF soldier's mother looking for assistance with knitting dolls to give away as gifts to Syrian refugee children.*

The news media-military relationship is largely a placid one with the news organizations writing and publishing stories, and CAF retweeting or linking to some of them. The retweets appear to be limited to news stories that further CAF's strategic communication goals or connect CAF to government strategic narratives.

#### 4.2.3.2 Entertainment Media

Entertainment media have also taken inspiration from CAF's history, both past and more contemporary. CAF tweets about programs, films, documentaries, etc. that share their story.

@CanadianArmy - 568213503963561984 - Thu Feb 19 01:00:30 2015 - Camp X, Canada's #WW2 secret agent school and inspiration for @: <http://bit.ly/17rmPEi> <http://pbs.twimg.com/media/B-J1HUeCIAAafjG.jpg>

*This tweet shares a link about the spy school that inspired a recent CBC series.*



@CanadianArmy - 643547361533394944 - Mon Sep 14 22:10:22 2015 - The film #HyenaRoad, based on experiences of @CanadianForces members in Afghanistan, premieres tonight @TIFF\_NET: <http://ow.ly/Scw4w>

*This tweet is about the Paul Gross film, Hyena Road, which was inspired by the experiences of CAF in Afghanistan.*

As the tweets above show, the military has an almost neutral relationship with the news media and slightly more positive relationship with the entertainment media. News media have an agenda-setting role in society, that is, they present information to the public, and through more frequent repetition of the information can have the public thinking that a particular issue is important (Djerf-Pierre and Shehata 2017; Munton 1984; Vargo, Guo, and Amazeen 2017). The impact of particular news stories is difficult to gauge, particularly in the current times where it is difficult to track who is reading what and where. It is worth noting is that news media can set the agenda for politicians as well (Sevenans 2017). Again, how much influence news media have, or in which direction media influence their public, is difficult to gauge. The military shares information with news organizations, and the media have the option to cover that story or not. However small the degree of media's influence and in whichever political direction, what matters is that media can influence the public, including the political decision makers, through their interpretations of national security strategic communication and strategic narratives.

Even with the military's use of social media to tell its own stories, the role of traditional media in talking about the defence and security issues remains important because the military is definitely not talking about policy issues on their Twitter accounts. That task remains with the media to cover stories regarding what the politicians are deciding about the military, where the military is headed next, what equipment it will receive, etc. In order to share "news," occasionally CAF will retweet a news organization's tweet about developments or share a link

to an online news article about whatever is happening. These links lead to news articles only and not opinion pieces because despite the disclaimer on some of the accounts that retweets do not equal endorsement, the military likes to avoid appearing partial to one side or another on any defence policy issue. So, for instance, the RCAF will not tweet opinions about the F-35 fighter jet procurement process because that remains in the political realm, and the Canadian military clings close to the commandments of civil-military relations theory.

There is little coverage of the Canadian military in Canadian entertainment media, mostly limited to a couple of recent films about the Canadian military's role in the Battle of Passchendaele and in Afghanistan. The portrayal of the military is generally positive, and the entertainment media sometimes take on the political, ethical, and moral questions that the military cannot through any public form of communication. On social media, CAF shared tweets about the film *Hyena Road*, which is about the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, and the show *X Company* about Canadian, US American, and British spies during World War II. Because films or even series do not have the frequency of news media or the production values and wide reach of Hollywood films and US television networks, their impact is likely limited. CAF mentions these entertainment options on their social media, but they appear less frequently than the shared news stories. Overall, the military supplements its own strategic communication on social media with retweets of or links to news and other media that may help it support government strategic narratives.

In this chapter, I have given a detailed description of what CAF says on social media and how they say it. Who they retweet and what stories they choose to share reflect on their communication strategy and the influence of the government's strategic narrative on that strategy. The tweets primarily are focused on building an organizational identity that

emphasizes the *Canadianness* and *warrior nature* of the Canadian Armed Forces. In the next chapter, I analyze how this strategic communication through tweets supported and furthered the Harper government's strategic narrative about Canada as a warrior nation.

## Chapter 6: Analysis

The Canadian Armed Forces use social media for strategic communication. Their strategic communication promotes government and state strategic narratives, but it is constrained in this by the norms of civil-military relations theory, in particular the norms that require an apolitical military and complete civil control over the military. Because Twitter is a social media site that has increasingly become a space for political exchange and because CAF cannot post political content, CAF's Twitter use is not optimal from a social media perspective. This battle between what CAF should do for more followers, likes, etc. on Twitter and what it can do due to CMR appears to put CAF at a disadvantage; however, by following the norms of CMR CAF can maintain its legitimacy as a military that submits to government control. CAF tweets tell the story of the organization, the state, and the government, and what they communicate about issues of national security on sociopolitical spaces like social media.

My theoretical contribution is to define strategic narrative and strategic communication as separate concepts, such that strategic narrative is the *state-centric story* and strategic communication is the *organization-centric telling of that story*. CAF's social media use is an example of strategic communication. There are glimpses of strategic narrative in that strategic communication because strategic communication is derived from strategic narrative. As my dataset is collected from a time period when the Harper government was in power, the strategic communication in the tweets parallels the Harper government's *warrior nation* strategic narrative of "Canada First," a narrative that is realized in the government's focus on Canadian sovereignty, particularly in the Arctic, and its support for the Afghan mission where Canadian hard power was on display.

Based on my reading of CAF tweets, I argue that government/state *strategic narrative* and military *strategic communication* are about the same *story* at different levels. Strategic narratives are the stories of the state and about the state that exist in the international system and the domestic system. Strategic communication is about how those stories are told by organizations and institutions. For instance, one of the strategic narratives about Canada is that it is a state that is a *helper*, so organizations like CAF will operationalize this narrative in their strategic communication by talking about how the Canadian military is *helping* (Goldie 2014; Wegner 2017). Government departments, therefore, take the overarching state narrative and *tell* it through their organizational strategic communication.

Because CAF is a public institution, it is closely bound to the state, which means that CAF's strategic communication closely follows the government's strategic narrative. The closeness between CAF's strategic communication and the state's strategic narrative is expected of the military according to civil-military relations theory whereby the military must do as it is told, which could translate to CAF telling the story as the government expects it to be told. Other organizations or institutions that are not state-based or are more loosely associated with the state might not rely as heavily on the state's narrative, but CAF does not have that freedom. In the rest of this chapter, I will take the themes that emerged from the data — organization, history, preparedness, and partnership — and discuss how they strategically communicate the Harper government's warrior nation strategic narrative, a shift from the previous peacekeeper narrative.

### ***Theme 1: Organization***

The organization-related tweets “introduce” CAF to their imagined public(s) and do the work of establishing CAF’s legitimacy as a communicator about issues of national security. By talking about the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the organization, these tweets build CAF’s credentials in the eyes of the public. This is not as obvious as saying “we are the experts.” Rather, the tweets establish the military’s credibility and legitimacy by *showing* CAF’s expertise either through text that mentions rank, military activity, weapons, etc. or literally in the form of videos and photos of CAF personnel working in uniform with or on military equipment. The establishment of credentials, while it may appear unnecessary, is important because spaces like social media are spaces of discussion and debate where members of the public could “compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion” (Habermas 1989, 25–26). Instead of presuming their legitimacy in the imagined public’s eye, CAF attempt to establish and maintain legitimacy by constantly showing why it is the authority on security issues, preemptively tackling any questions regarding its credibility. Establishing its credibility also means that when CAF communicates the state narrative, it is taken seriously.

The military sees itself as battle-oriented and kinetic, at least based on the larger number of tweets that mention combat training and the memory of heroes of various wars compared to a fewer number of tweets about peacekeeping. For instance, the main Canadian Armed Forces Twitter account, @canadianforces, mentions the word “peacekeeping” 9 times and the word “war” 56 times, over six times more. While this can partially be attributed to all the history tweets that reference Canada’s participation in the World Wars and the Korean War, Canada’s history of peacekeeping is not mentioned as frequently. There is also the word “combat” which appears 28 times, over three times more than peacekeeping. It is difficult to not draw the

conclusion from these numbers that the military prefers war and combat operations to peacekeeping, but that is not entirely unexpected because war has been militaries' bread and butter through the ages.

CAF's strategic communication about war and combat instead of peacekeeping in its tweets, however, also furthered the warrior narrative that the Harper government preferred for CAF instead of peacekeeping as reflected in the preference given to combat and training missions in Eastern Europe instead of peacekeeping or UN observer missions in Syria (Koring 2012; MacKinnon 2015). During the Afghan war, the government sent Canadian troops to engage in combat operations in Afghanistan as an active ally of the US, but at home those same operations were labelled post-conflict peacebuilding to improve conditions for women and girls as well as education and democracy (Freeman 2007; Globe and Mail 2006; Woods 2007). The Canadian public was initially sold on Afghanistan as a stabilization mission (Stein and Lang 2007). As CAF's role changed in Afghanistan, the governments in power did not manage to "market the mission to the public" in a "sufficiently engaging" way (Saideman 2016, 104; see also Boucher and Nossal 2017). Even though Prime Minister Harper stopped speaking about the Afghan engagement after 2008 extension of CAF's mission (Saideman 2016), the Harper government's support for the warrior strategic narrative is reflected in one way in its preference for referring to the Canadian military the Canadian *Armed* Forces instead of the Canadian Forces as they had been previously known (Boucher and Nossal 2017, 48). Thus, the tweets that form the strategic communication of the military during the Harper era tend to focus more heavily on the kinetic capabilities of CAF.

## *Theme 2: History*

The history theme further establishes the credibility of CAF as a military that fought and distinguished itself and the Canadian state in both World Wars as well as other conflicts. The strategic communication deals with anniversaries of famous battles as well as the personnel who participated in those battles. The tweets of the historic battles and moments from various wars often revolve around mentions of heroism, military feats, major losses of life, and Canada's service as a capable and dependable ally. The first three motifs — heroism, feats, and losses — create the warrior image, while the motif of ally echoes the idea of fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with friends. The idea of the warrior is further emphasized through mentions of medals and honours won as well as the lives lost. The mentions of the highs of victory and the lows of loss build a more credible picture of the military as an institution and those who serve.

The Harper government's move to the warrior narrative was well supported by the military strategic communication of CAF's own history. By focusing on battles and heroism, the warrior ideal was brought to life. The mentions of peacekeeping were few and far between. In a tweet about the Battle of Medak Pocket, there was no mention of peacekeeping unless one followed the link to the CAF website, despite there being enough space to fit in a peacekeeping hashtag. In the tweets in my dataset, there appeared to be a papering over of peacekeeping, which is an example of CAF supporting the warrior strategic narrative.

The primacy of the warrior narrative aligns well with the Harper government's interest in putting forward a more ferocious face on Canadian foreign policy with its lack of interest in UN peacekeeping and its support for NATO's assurance and deterrence operations against Russian aggression in Central and Eastern Europe. In an address to a business audience in New York, Prime Minister Harper spoke of the Canadian commitment to fight alongside the US in



Afghanistan (Globe and Mail 2006). Speaking of the military's combat operations as part of a larger narrative of Canada as an ally in the war on terror, was seen by the Harper government as a potentially useful way to further not only shared security interests, but also the economic partnership with the US (ibid.). There has been a general decline in Canadian contributions to peacekeeping over time, but under the Harper era there was a clear preference for combat missions. While it is unclear whether a Liberal government would have behaved differently under the same circumstances, the Liberal government that followed Harper has committed to peacekeeping operations.

That CAF privileges its warrior history over peacekeeping is undeniable because less than one per cent of the tweets in the four accounts I analyzed mention peace. There might be external links to stories about peacekeeping as in the Medak Pocket tweet I mentioned above, but it is impossible to ignore the fact that more recent decades of peacekeeping are acknowledged less frequently than wars that are much older. Some of this focus has to do with the military's perception of itself as a warrior institution and a need to project that identity to its imagined publics to generate and maintain organizational legitimacy, and some of it appears to come from the government's use of the warrior strategic narrative as a way to further the state's interests in the international system.

### ***Theme 3: Preparedness***

CAF's tweets about training further legitimize the organization and reinforce the warrior narrative. Being prepared is one of the most important parts of the military's job. Because interstate war is rarer now than in earlier centuries, the military can only keep its skills sharp at the organizational and personnel levels as well as at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels

through constant training. The military as a well-functioning organization “cannot be improvised in weeks or months; it requires long years of training” (Moltke 1880, as cited in Moltke, Hughes, and Bell 1995, Chapter 1). Preparing for war/combat, peace, or aid operations is necessary to prevent the military not just from doing poorly in the mission, but also to keep military personnel safe in perilous conditions. Moltke also notes that while the military’s work, especially the constant training, does not constitute “productive work,” it is work that is necessary for the defence of the state (ibid.). Communicating about training reinforces that the warriors of Canada are constantly working to remain prepared to defend Canada.

The training tweets also serve to demystify CAF’s accomplishments. For many Canadians, “being ‘military’ implies a cast of mind unnecessary in a country whose myth of war emphasizes voluntarism and the prowess of amateurs” (Morton 1992, ix). Despite the attempts of several Canadian military historians, including Morton, what these historians call the “militia myth” persists and allows Canadians to throw their hat in when wars break out while starving the military of resources during peacetime. After all, as the myth predicts, Canadian soldiers just show up and are good. The cost of this un-militarism was borne by soldiers who lost their lives in the two World Wars due to “ill-trained and inexperienced leaders” (Morton 1981, 2). The tweets about training, therefore, help the military share the hard work and preparation that goes into being ready to answer the government’s call to action whether it is to provide aid during domestic disasters or to engage in combat operations.

The training tweets also foreground the military’s relationship with allied states because CAF is often tweeting about training with other militaries as part of bilateral or multilateral exercises. The training tweets can also be seen as reassuring to Canada’s allies insofar as the allies do not have to carry the weight of untrained Canadian soldiers until they gain field

experience; rather, CAF personnel now show up prepared and prepared to fight shoulder-to-shoulder with allies. Training allies and training with allies reinforces the warrior narrative because most of the training is not peacekeeping or humanitarian aid provision related. Most training is about warfighting and combat operations and most bilateral and multilateral exercises are to ensure interoperability between Canada and other states in case of war. Tweets about training domestically and internationally with allies also work to reinforce the Harper government's warrior narrative.

#### ***Theme 4: Partnership***

Tweets about partnerships frequently mentioned international partnerships such as NATO and NORAD, but there were mentions of domestic partnerships as well. These tweets mainly do the work of legitimizing CAF as a security actor. The warrior image here appears in the form of movies and television series about CAF that portray the military at war or news coverage of combat operations that CAF shared via a hyperlink to the news website in a tweet. The warrior narrative is also communicated through the military engaging in training with other government departments, often taking on the relatively dangerous tasks. For instance, during search and rescue operations, the military often take on the more dangerous tasks such as finding people lost in a rough sea, while local authorities are responsible for the care of the rescued once the military brings them safely to land.

The local and domestic partnerships also work to root the military in Canadian society. CAF represents the warriors of *Canada*. Because Canada has fought alongside allies in nearly all wars, usually supporting an allied cause, "Canada's armed forces have suffered from the suspicion that their allegiance is linked more to allies than to Canada" (Morton 1992, xii).

Canada lacks a clearly defined foreign and defence policy as well as the military strength and public will to engage fruitfully in its own operations internationally. All of that means that when the military does act to assist allies, the public can perceive it as the military fighting for US or British interests instead of Canadian interests. So, grounding the Canadian military in Canadian society through mentions of domestic partnerships with hockey teams, businesspersons, local charities, etc. does the work of Canadianizing the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Harper government's warrior strategic narrative came through in the *Canada First Defence Strategy* that emphasized Canadian sovereignty and a leadership role in international security (Department of National Defence Canada 2008). The plan has a "clear level of ambition" when it comes to defending Canada and North America and exercising leadership on international peace and security issues, but it also mentions partnerships at home with the defence industry, which would help CAF fulfill its missions at home and abroad (ibid., 7). In other words, CAF, even as it is accomplishing missions abroad with allies and partners, are doing so to benefit not only Canadian security, but also Canadian industry and trade. CAF's strategic communication in the form of tweets about its domestic and international partnerships thus works to substantiate the government's warrior narrative.

### ***Strategic Communication of Strategic Narratives***

Public organizations like the military operationalize the state and/or the government's strategic narrative(s) in their strategic communication with their imagined public(s). The military adheres particularly closely to the strategic narratives because of the compliance expected of the institution under the principle of civil control of the military. Any deviation from the strategic narrative in its communication has the potential to cast doubt on whether the

military is fully following orders. Following the government's narrative also ensures that the military retains its credibility and legitimacy in the public eye by illustrating its submission to civil control. While going against the government's narrative might capture a little, or a lot, more public interest on social media that often thrive on antagonistic politics, the loss of legitimacy that would entail would not be worth it for the military despite the (generally) consistently low level of public interest in military affairs.

Organizational strategic communication is often where the strategic narrative takes form. While strategic communication takes an organization-centric approach, in the case of the military the organization is so closely identified with the state that even with the organization-centricity of its communication the strategic narratives come through clearly. The narrative becomes a way for the organization to frame information about itself and its work in a way that has broad appeal to the imagined public(s) and also follows the strictures of CMR. The public is often aware of the strategic narratives of the state in a more abstract way, but those narratives become clearer when organizations use the communication about the organization to illustrate those narratives. Organizations like the military are particularly potent tellers of the strategic narrative because of the way the story of the state is entangled with the story of the military.

The Harper government shifted to a warrior strategic narrative to garner public support for the Afghan mission, but then tried to add in peacebuilding and women's rights narratives to persuade a resistant Canadian public (Freeman 2007; Massie 2015; Woods 2007). The strategic narrative(s) around the Afghan War eventually became muddled at the government level and, therefore, failed to gain and retain public support for the mission over time (Massie 2015). For instance, the Harper government initially spoke of the Afghan mission as serving Canada's national interests, but when that reasoning failed to persuade the public, it changed its rhetoric

to justify the mission in terms of Canada's international obligations, especially helping the Afghans (Boucher 2009; Boucher and Nossal 2017).

Political efforts to spin the strategic narratives for Canada's participation in the Afghan mission in order to garner more public support met with mixed results. The military, however, stuck to the Harper government's initial attempts to shift to the "Canada as warrior nation" narrative in its social media strategic communication, probably because it best served the military's image and interests (Saideman 2016). CAF's communication in the tweets I collected, therefore, clearly reflects the warrior narrative. This illustrates an important point about strategic communication: because strategic communication is organization-centric, the military can select the narrative(s) that suits it best and communicate that from the organizational perspective. The government, however, has to ensure that its use of, or changes to, an existing strategic narrative align with other state narratives. The Harper government's warrior narrative did not sit well with a public that often thinks of the state as peacekeepers to the world as result of carefully crafted narratives supported by previous governments, both Liberal and Conservative.

Inconsistencies in strategic narratives are easier to spot because narratives are often known to the public as part of the national identity. The Harper government's use of multiple strategic narratives, which occasionally ran counter to each other, made selling the Afghan war to the Canadian public messy and ultimately unsuccessful (Massie 2014, 2015). Compared to the ideological/strategic level at which narratives are used, strategic communication takes place at the tactical level, where deviations from the narrative can be a bit more difficult to spot, especially in the fast-paced world of social media. On the other hand, if something is posted on social media, or the Internet, it has the potential to become a major part of public consciousness.

This is often especially true if it is a mistake because people will take a public organization to task if it posts something that is socially, politically, and/or culturally unacceptable on social media. CAF's strategic communication on Twitter was successful insofar as they stuck closely to the warrior narrative as the consistency of their tweets shows, while also adhering to the strictures of CMR. Focusing on only one of the Harper government's strategic narratives ended up being good communication strategy for CAF.

### ***Information Strategy, Imagined Public(s), and Social Media***

The military organization and military personnel remain bound by the rules of communication that restrict their expression to being "apolitical." By following this code, the military plays by the main rule of civil-military relations: that the military not engage in the politics of state and remain at all times dedicated to following the orders of the civilian government. This military obedience is important for the military to maintain its integrity in its role as a branch of the government and to reassure the public and the government that the military will not be engaging in a coup. The public may try to engage the military in politics via social media, and the military personnel in charge of the organizational social media accounts must rein in any urge to let their preference for a political party's vision or a particular policy show. Civil-military relations, therefore, remain unchanged with the addition of the potential for public-military interaction through social media because the official CAF social media accounts toe the CMR line by supporting the government's strategic narrative.

Social media allow the military to share information about its engagements on an ongoing basis keeping in mind operational security concerns. This information sharing acts to make the military appear accountable and transparent as well as a credible and legitimate actor

on national security. The military social media accounts become a way for the public to keep aware of the military and ongoing missions. These media allow the military to tell its story in its own words. Because of CMR norms, those words support government and state strategic narratives. Political parties' desire to follow the path that leads them to most votes might have them overusing, changing, and/or mixing narratives for broader appeal, but CAF benefits from communicating those narratives from an organizational perspective. The organizational lens on the telling of changing narratives ensures that the strategic communication adheres to the organizational identity even if the narratives are shifting. The ongoing strategic communication of the warrior narrative via social media helps lay the foundations for the legitimacy of the organization and its missions at home and abroad because it aligns with the organization's preference and self-identification with the warrior identity.

Even though, or perhaps because, the military is not posting political content does not mean it is not gaining political capital. In fact, by colouring within the lines of civil-military relations, the military gains credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of its imagined public(s), which include the government and citizens of the state. By being *good Canadians* or at the very least portraying that image on social media by following the state strategic narrative(s), the military shows that it is *of the people* and that it is rooted in Canadian society and values. Such social embeddedness might help the organization weather adverse events better. On the other hand, not responding rapidly and in a manner expected by society could make things worse for the organization.

Lack of speed and transparency could have a negative impact on the organization, as it did in the Somalia Affair in the early 1990s. Incidents such as the recent "Proud Boys" case receive immediate backlash on social media. The organization needs to be prepared to tackle not



only the negative actions of their personnel, but also the negative impact on the organization's identity such incidents create. Like any other communication medium, social media are a double-edged sword in that both good and bad news spreads fast and far, although bad news often travels faster and farther than good. The benefits of being on social media, however, outweigh the potential risk for the military because online presence and public engagement can help bolster institutional legitimacy through strategic communication to a point where the organization can withstand negative cases better. Of course, retaining that legitimacy requires that the military continue as an "apolitical" actor online that communicates an accepted/acceptable strategic narrative through its posts and tweets.

Writing towards the end of the Vietnam War, Huntington (1973) argued that the military's role was changing within the national security environment, and the military needed to be concerned not only with deterring the other superpower, but also with diplomacy that would ensure continual allied support. Huntington (1973, 10) notes, "The issue is not military capabilities, but the *meanings* which people attach to military capabilities and *whose* view of those meanings is to prevail" [original emphasis]. By putting the strategic narrative into words, military strategic communication makes clear and shapes the state's image in the minds of its imagined public(s), that is, the tweets put text, images, and sounds to the ideas that exist within and outside Canada about not only the Canadian military, but also *Canadianness* and the role of Canada and its military at home and abroad as *warriors* of Canada.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

When newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared, “Canada’s back,” his announcement was met with the cheers of his supporters on election night and then with optimism from climate action allies on the international stage (Dembicki 2015; Fitz-Morris 2015; Nossal 2016; The Canadian Press 2015). Yet, Canada had never left. What Prime Minister Trudeau’s proclamation meant, in other words, was that Canada was back to being the cooperative, collaborative “helper fixer” it had been considered to be before the Harper era (Goldie 2014). Prime Minister Harper once also used the phrase “Canada is back” when speaking to a U.S. audience to talk about Canada’s contribution to the combat mission in Afghanistan as well as the strong economic relationship between the two countries. He meant that Canada would be an ally in the US’s war on terror and on continental defence generally as well as continue its economic cooperation with the US (Globe and Mail 2006). Both these statements indicate shifts in the strategic narrative of the state as envisioned by the governing party. Eventually, that shift in strategic narrative influences the strategic communication of various government entities, including the military.

My contribution in this dissertation lies in connecting the strategic narrative of the state to the strategic communication of the military. The strategic narratives literature is concerned with understanding how states establish boundaries and identities in the international system and how they use those boundaries and identities to shape other actors’ behaviour (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, and Roselle 2014, 16). Military strategic communication literature is concerned with how governments communicate with a variety of publics about foreign policy decisions and the military missions that result (Paul 2010, 2016; Ringsmose and Børgeesen 2011).

Strategic communication efforts are also considered a way to supplement military efforts in the field. I argue that the government narratives about the state's role in the world are *operationalized* in the military strategic communication. The military, because it is a domestic institution that enacts foreign policy while supporting police and other agencies at home, communicates within both domestic and international systems; therefore, its strategic communication is — and must be — connected most closely to the state's strategic narrative.

The shift in strategic narrative to framing Canada as a warrior nation that Prime Minister Harper initiated with his “Canada is back” pronouncement was operationalized in the Canadian Armed Forces' strategic communication about the organization and its missions in their tweets. The military is often closely tied to the state's identity, so the close relationship between the state's strategic narrative and the military's strategic communication is understandable. Civil-military relations expectations further ensure that the military does not stray from the state's narrative in its strategic communication. Because the information is directed at the imagined public(s) with the intent of gaining and retaining public support for military missions, the presence or absence of synergy between the state narrative and the military communication can have a positive or negative effect on the organization and the government.

Strategy is an important consideration when sharing information, particularly when it relates to the security of the state and its public. Not all information can be shared because it might hurt the state instead of protecting it. Information sharing, if not engaged in strategically, can have deeply harmful effects on the state. Information strategy is at the most basic level “the *story* we are trying to tell the world” [original emphasis] (Borer 2007, 238). These stories are the lens through which the decisions and actions of the state are filtered for a variety of

public(s), so it is important that these stories be planned in a way to produce the best outcome of all involved.

What is important is *who* is telling *what* story to *whom* and *how* or *whether* those stories affect the state, its public(s), and its allies. Who is telling the story matters because it colours how the public(s) — imagined and realized — receive and interpret that story. The public is made up of *producers* now. Members of the public no longer just receive the story, they interpret and reproduce their understanding(s) of the story within their own public, social, and private spheres and networks. Unlike McLuhan's (1966) assertion that the medium is the message, I would argue that the medium is part of the message, but the content of the message is also important, particularly as that content evolves through the use of various media and reaches a variety of public(s).

Another aspect of information strategy is how actions the state takes appear through the lens of the story. In other words, “whatever the story we are telling, to what extent do our actions validate the veracity of our words? One of the unforeseen results of globalization in the ‘information age’ is that historical double standards (of which all states have been guilty throughout the ages) are increasingly difficult to hide or explain way. ... increasing numbers of the world’s citizens have access to good (and bad) information about the world around them” (Borer 2007, 238). The planning of the strategic narrative or the shift in strategic narrative as well as the strategic communication planning need to imagine its public(s) and plan the information sharing accordingly. If the government’s strategic narrative is related to peacekeeping, but the military is tweeting only about combat, then there is a fundamental disconnect that may raise concerns around the efficacy of the civil control over the military.

Care with planning, therefore, applies to the way that strategic communication operationalizes strategic narrative.

Another contribution that arises from my research is evidence that the military's communication is not apolitical. Following the constraints of civil-military relations theory means that the military limits itself to what might be considered "apolitical" issues and topics. While following strict codes of information sharing and respecting the civil-military relations boundaries in its communication even on social media might make the military appear apolitical, the Canadian Armed Forces, nonetheless, are engaging in politics. The military followed the shift in the strategic narrative initiated by the Harper government, but the shift itself was political. So, following the strictures of civil-military relations might mean the military inevitably engages in politics mainly because the military does not have the choice to oppose any such shifts in strategy initiated by the government. The military also engages politically on normative issues that have broad social consensus, for instance, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, etc. instead of issues that are controversial such as procurement. Thus, to signal civilian control over the military, the military engages in politics as framed by the strategic narrative.

Further, my research indicates that in relation to information strategy, political and military strategies are tightly coupled. Military strategy is enacted political policy as we see with military strategic communication operationalizing government strategic narratives. Separating the two, as we see in the prescriptions of traditional civil-military relations theory, can have negative consequences. As Sholtis (2014, 1) notes, "The proposition that military strategy is inherently political is complicated by a Western tradition that views politics and policy-making as an area of competence and authority distinct from military operations and

strategy-making.” Government policy leads to military strategy, and what results from the applied military strategy in turn has an impact on the government’s future policy.

The strategic narrative provides the framework for the strategic communication of the military as well as other public organizations’ and institutions. In the operationalization of the government’s narrative, the military should constantly refer back to that narrative in its communication, which CAF does well in its tweets. When the government’s narrative changes, the military’s operations are affected because the interpretive touchstone is either altered or perhaps no more. Certainly, it is not easy for the government to change the narrative, but when it does change, the task of the military can be made more difficult. CAF managed to escape the confusion created by the Harper government’s multiple, mixed narratives vis-à-vis the Afghan mission by focusing on only the warrior nation narrative, a narrative that was a natural fit for the organization. The military has the advantage of communicating shifting strategic narratives through its own organizational identity lens.

In the military’s case, political nuance also emerges in its silences on social media. While the military tweets and retweets ministers about receiving funding from the government for infrastructure upgrades or the modernization of equipment, there are no tweets, at least within my limited dataset, about the problems with the defence procurement system in Canada and the challenges the military experiences because of aging equipment. Stories in news media about important military and national and international defence are retweeted, but those that tackle problems within the civilian department are not shared by the military. The military shares information about organizational imperfections and problems such as the problem of workplace and sexual harassment in CAF, but it does not share information about government decisions such as cuts to defence funding even when they are announced publicly and affect the

military directly. This might be because the Canadian national defence team is divided into the civilian DND and the military CAF, which means that political decisions might be shared with the public by DND only or that the military can only share the “good” political news. This is an illustration of the principle that the military is apolitical when it plays nice and follows orders, and political when it does not.

In summation, CAF engages in organization-centric strategic communication to support state-centric strategic narratives. Strategic communication is a tweet from the military, while strategic narrative is the government’s defence and security policy supported by that tweet. Strategic communication is the telling of strategic narratives, while strategic narratives frame strategic communication. Because of how closely the military is tied to state identity and because the military is expected to follow civil-military relations norms, the military’s strategic communication closely follows the government’s strategic narrative. Military success on social media, thus, needs to be measured keeping in mind that the military is cannot use social media as intended due to the restrictions of civil military relations theory. The standard markers of success on social media such as number of followers, retweets, etc. do not work for the military. Rather, what matters is whether the military retains its legitimacy even as it communicates shifting strategic narratives.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

Certain limitations in the research for this dissertation suggest opportunities for further work. First, and perhaps most important, I was denied access to the public affairs personnel who are in charge of the Canadian Armed Forces’ social media accounts. Interviews with the public affairs personnel could potentially illuminate the thinking behind CAF’s social media use, its

evolution over time, and its future prospects. The evolution of the tweets over time is addressed to some extent in this dissertation, but future researchers, if they can access the entire Twitter or other social media archives of CAF, might be able to confirm or deny my findings along with shedding light on other insights related to the temporal aspects of social media use.

Interviews with public affairs personnel could also reveal how the strategic communication plan is crafted, how synergy between strategic communication and government strategic narratives is established, and how the social media posts are planned and executed. Under the Harper government, Industry Canada tweets went through a 12-step process from conception to publication on Twitter (The Canadian Press 2014). Under the Trudeau government, Health Canada tweets are planned two weeks in advance (Beeby 2018). As expected, there is little spontaneity in government tweets, but it is worth understanding what the 12 steps of the approval process are or how tweets evolve over a two-week planning period. The military may have similar tweet development and/or approval mechanisms. It is something that would be worth exploring, particularly the coordination of the tweets with any shifts in government policy.

Second, I analyzed only the text of tweets in this dissertation, but it might be useful to analyze the tweets in their entirety including the images, videos, and other multimedia associated with the text in a tweet. According to Griffin (2014, 145), “The fact that media images of warfare and military conflict often contain highly charged content, content thick with the potential for impending violence, destruction, or death, which is moreover connected to feelings of solidarity, nationalism, partisanship, or antagonism towards a defined enemy, means that wartime images are likely to have a strong attraction for viewers and more likely than routine use images to provoke strong emotions. ... Images with such emotional potential, also



seem to have greater potential to influence public perceptions, and affect levels of public support for government policies and military actions.” Thus, an image and/or multimedia analysis would provide a more comprehensive view of the narrative of CAF. Third, and related to the second point, I only looked at the tweet texts, but future researchers could analyze the metrics of which tweets gather more likes and/or which tweets are most frequently retweeted. Such a quantitative analysis along with a qualitative analysis of the tweets themselves could shed light on why some kinds of tweets garner more public attention than others.

Fourth, while I have focused on the military, it could be useful to see how other government departments communicate the state’s strategic narratives. The strategic narrative(s) are about state identity in the international system, so the strategic communication of other departments such as Global Affairs Canada that are focused on international issues can be reviewed to see if and how they operationalize the government’s strategic narrative(s). Public Safety Canada’s operationalization of security narratives at home would make for interesting analysis. It might also be worth exploring the strategic communication of other non-security related government departments to see whether and how they engage the state’s strategic narrative(s). Such research could help parse the ways that governments can shape state identity at home and in the international system; whether there can be a different story told at home, while international system is dealt another narrative; and how the domestic stories interact with strategic narratives in the international system.

Fifth and finally, while there is much nuance to uncover and explore within civil-military relations and how information strategy affects them, the public perspective is still missing. It is usually only when the military disagrees with the government in public that the concerns around military shirking and disobedience arise (Feaver 2005). The public perspective

on civil-military relations or on military engagements is not well accounted for in CMR, strategic narrative, and strategic communication literatures. Mostly this is because representing the public conceptually and empirically creates methodological challenges (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle 2014, 179). I have touched upon the public briefly in this dissertation, but I too encountered difficulties with fully understanding the public perception of information strategy conceptually and empirically, other than as a member of the public myself.

Information strategy is about unifying the state, the public, and the military understandings of foreign policy decisions and the military engagements that result in order that the state, the government, and the military can retain their credibility and legitimacy among the public. Speaking of civil-military relations, Bland (2000, 14) argues, they are “an accountability mechanism meant to join the armed forces to the elected civil authority and politicians to the people. But the term also embraces the notions of effect and process: the dynamic interaction of the armed forces and their leaders with political authorities and even with society.” The public, therefore, must be taken into consideration in the process of communicating narratives.

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## Appendix A: Codebook

The codes and symbols that emerged from my analysis of the collected tweets are listed below.

Symbol or Code	Interpretation/Explanation
<b>\$</b>	<p>Money.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that share information about money being raised or spent or information about military budget allocations and spending. Examples of tweets that mention money include funds raised by the Canada Army Run for wounded and ill service members, funds spent on equipment or simply the cost of equipment, etc.</p>
<b>?</b>	<p>Lack of clarity.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that require further clicking and searching to uncover what the tweet is about because it is not immediately clear what the tweet is about. Such tweets can prevent engagement because people may not take the time to explore the external links, especially if they don't know what the tweet is about and what it might be linking them to.</p>
<b>Abor</b>	<p>Indigenous/Aboriginal/Métis/etc.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about aboriginal programs, culture, etc. and the relationship of the aboriginal communities with CAF.</p> <p>So far, there is no mention of any antagonism between the aboriginal communities and the military even though the relationship between the military and the Canadian aboriginal nations has not always been calm and cooperative. An example could be the role of the military in subduing the Oka Crisis.</p> <p>This code is a subset of the Diversity code in an obvious way, but there may be some benefit to discussing the lack of any sort of International Relations or Partnership “flavour” here, considering that the aboriginal groups stand as First Nations.</p>
<b>Afg</b>	<p>Afghanistan.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention Afghanistan. This code is important because it mentions the most recent war that CAF was involved with. The social memory of the World Wars and the Korean and Cold Wars might be hazy for the middle aged and completely absent for some young Canadians, but Afghanistan was the first time Canada engaged in kinetic operations since Korea, the first time it became more than a peacekeeping contingent. This war reignited the image of the military as warriors and not just peacekeepers in the minds of everyday Canadians as well as the rest of the world.</p>
<b>Ann</b>	<p>Anniversaries.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention anniversaries such as the 70 years anniversary of Canada's liberation of the Netherlands during World War II or the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. These events</p>

	<p>are a subset of the History and War codes as well because they often are anniversaries of historical battles won. They can also be subsets of the Event (Domestic or International) and Ceremony codes because they are often celebrated either in Canada or abroad or both in Canada and abroad.</p> <p>There are some anniversaries that are more Organization code related in that they refer to equipment that has been with the military for several decades or a branch of the military that was established decades ago. For example, Tweet # 648516892680806400 celebrates the anniversary of HMCS OTTAWA, a ship that was commissioned on that day 19 years ago. Tweet # 576382810744836097 celebrates the one year anniversary of the completion of CAF's mission in Afghanistan. Tweet # 556089121090068480 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of CAF's Military Police service. These anniversary dates explain more about the military organization in Canada, often through external links. Similar to the O.P, O.S, and particularly O.N, these anniversaries help inform the public about the organization and its history from both a contemporary and long-term perspective.</p>
<b>Art</b>	<p>Art/artistic endeavours.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about the use of art for mental health improvement and/or commemorative purposes (the latter includes the creation of paintings, sculptures, statues, etc., e.g., Statue of Lt. Col. John McCrae). Also included are tweets about music, such as those about the Fortissimo, which is an event of musical performances by military bands (a tattoo).</p>
<b>Attack</b>	<p>Attack.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about the terrorist attacks in Quebec and at Parliament Hill in October 2014. Tweets also include the commemoration and remembrance of those attacks subsequently.</p>
<b>Awd</b>	<p>Awards/achievements/accomplishments.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about awards received by parts of the organization (e.g., a regiment or company winning an award) or achievements of organizational personnel or teams (e.g., an officer or NCM or company or regiment getting recognition for something in a joint exercise or operation).</p> <p>This code also includes the congratulations and Bravo Zulu that are passed on to the award winning personnel, teams, or units. Sometimes the award code refers to accomplishments that are not necessarily associated with an award or honour being given, but the code notes the fact that a tweet was generated to recognize an accomplishment, no matter how big or small, with or without an award or ceremony of recognition.</p>
<b>Cerem</b>	<p>Ceremony.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention activities that have ceremonial or</p>



<b>or Crm</b>	traditional relevance to the military. For example, raising a pennant, changing of the guard at Parliament Hill, the awarding of colours to a regiment, etc. are military ceremonies that have some traditional values associated with them. See also the Domestic Event and Organizational Event codes for intersections.
<b>Char</b>	Charity/fundraising/philanthropic activity. Refers to tweets about charity work and/or fundraising efforts by CAF for various groups. An example would be some of the work CAF personnel do during Christmas, for example, Tweet #673933715588972544: “Op Ho Ho Ho brings #Christmas cheer to hospitalized children.”
<b>CIMIC</b>	Civil-Military Cooperation (term that emerged from the Provincial Reconstruction Teams of Iraq and Afghanistan). Refers to any tweets that share information about the military collaborating with or training to collaborate with civilian departmental counterparts, civilian agencies (local and international), civilian organizations, etc. usually in areas where there are active missions, e.g. Afghanistan till 2014.
<b>City</b>	City names. Refers to tweets that mention names of cities. This can happen also because the names of ships (e.g., HMCS Fredericton) or units (e.g., the Calgary Highlanders) have the name of the city in them. The cities’ names also come up when CAF organizes events in the city. For anyone searching for information on Twitter or recent tweets about these cities, CAF might come up which provides another way that the tweeting public finds out that CAF tweets, and some of those who find out might choose to follow the CAF accounts as well thus improving CAF’s Twitter reach. CAF tweets, however, do not use the hashtag function consistently for cities, that is, in some tweets Calgary is written with the hashtag — #Calgary, while in others, it is the city’s name without the hashtag. More consistency with hashtagging could lead to CAF tweets coming up more frequently in searches. While their tweets might not be relevant to the person searching for #Calgary tweets, that person will nonetheless be exposed to the fact that CAF is also tweeting about the city in particular, and tweeting about Canada in general. In other words, by consistently hashtagging CAF could improve its chances of exposure to the public.
<b>Comm</b>	Community. Refers to tweets about working with or reaching out to the community. Similar to direct communication in some ways, but while direct communication is often restricted to communicating directly via social media, the community code is about tweets related to events where the community is invited to organizational events [see O.EV code] and gets to interact with the members of CAF in person. There are public

	<p>tours, Canada Army Run, RCAF Run, Remembrance Day, etc. when the public may interact with service members. There are tweets from CAF offering the chance to get CAF members to speak at school and/or community events during Veteran’s Week.</p>
<b>Cute</b>	<p>Cute. Refers to tweets that are charming or adorable, often including tweets about children, Christmas, and Santa references.</p>
<b>DC</b>	<p>Direct Communication. Refers to any tweets that communicate directly with either individual members of the public or with the public at large. Tweets in this category include greetings on major common holidays, e.g., Merry Christmas; PSAs about common issues such as mental health and about when RCAF planes would fly past (giving out the time so that people who might have sensitivity to loud sounds can plan their day accordingly); and direct @username tweet responses to some of those who direct questions to the CAF accounts. Also includes retweets of tweets by members of the public, e.g., CAF’s retweets of tweeted public condolences regarding Sgt. Doiron’s death.</p>
<b>Div or Divrs</b>	<p>Diversity. Refers to any tweets that mention diversity or use hashtags that do so. For example, tweets during Black History Month often mention the history of Black people’s service with CAF and often use the hashtag #BlackHistoryMonth. There are the tweets that carry directly-diversity related hashtags #diversity and #diverse, and there are others that are about “diverse groups” such as women, people who identify as LGBTQI2S, visible minorities, etc.</p>
<b>EQ</b>	<p>Equipment. Refers to any tweets that mention equipment name. E.g. CF-18 and CF-100 aircraft, CP-140 Aurora aircraft, etc. This code also contains references to infrastructure upgrades, changes in the uniforms, etc. Mentioning equipment by name could be a way to highlight what equipment the military is using, which could be read as a tangential reference to the need for modernization of the military, particularly the equipment. However, this might be reading too much into the intention of mentioning equipment by name. It could be that mentioning equipment could simply be a subcategory of jargon, where those that belong to the “elite military in-group” know what a particular piece of equipment is, and they do not need to refer to search the name to grasp the entire meaning of the tweet. In a way, then, the mention of weapons (and sometimes their technical capabilities) can help create a sense of organizational identity that is closely tied to the uniform, weapons, and other infrastructure of the military. This is similar perhaps to how an instrument can become part of the identity of a musician, for example, it is difficult to think of Yo-Yo Ma without the cello. Similarly, uniforms and individual weapons</p>

	can become part of the soldier identity. Larger weapons such as artillery, tanks, aircraft, etc. can become part of the team identity of a group of soldiers. The largest weapons of them all, ships, can become home away from home for sailors who spend weeks and months on the ship.
<b>EV</b>	Events. Refers to any tweets about events such as Christmas, New Year's Eve/Day, Eid, Diwali, International Women's Day, Remembrance Day, etc.
<b>EV(D)</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>D.EV</b>	Domestic Events. Refers to any tweets about domestic/national events such as Canada Day, National Aboriginal Day, etc.
<b>EV(O)</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>O.EV</b>	Organizational Events. Refers to any tweets about events that are important to and/or organized by CAF. For example, the Canada Army Run, the RCAF Run, etc. are events organized by the military. The code relates to the Ceremony code as well because there are military events that are often ceremonial/traditional in nature, e.g., the retirement of commanding officer, change of command, etc.
<b>F</b>	Fun. Refers to any tweets that share images or comments about military personnel having fun on the job, share facts that make the organization look like it's a fun place to work, or share information about exercises where our personnel or our allies personnel had a bit of a tough time (e.g. Tweet about French soldiers for an exercise in Canada with temperatures hitting -25C). There is also the hashtag #TriviaTuesday for tweets that ask trivia questions about the organization and answer those questions after some time. The trivia tag can be seen as subset of the Organization code because the questions are usually about the organization's history, equipment, personnel, etc. It can also be seen as a subset of the Direct Communication code because the hashtag invites public participation with an organizational (virtual) "event" (like an online quiz). Those who engage with the trivia questions will generally return to the account to check if they got the correct answer to the question. The fun questions then not only invite engagement, they also extend the engagement with the enticement of an answer.
<b>Fam</b>	Family. Refers to any tweets that refer to military families by mentioning resources for them or providing links to their stories (families' experiences of having someone in the military).
<b>Fit</b>	Health and Fitness.

	<p>Refers to any tweets about health and well-being, whether physical or mental. Importantly, this includes mentions of injured and ill veterans, programs that support veterans (e.g., Soldier On program), struggles that returning veterans face (e.g., PTSD), etc.</p> <p>The Bell Let's Talk PSAs can be seen as a subset of this code because they talk about mental well-being and the importance of accessing support.</p>
<b>Gend</b>	<p>Gender.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention gender in any way, e.g., International Women's Day tweets about women who serve with CAF. This code can be seen as a subset of the Diversity code.</p> <p>This code is also important on its own because while the issue of women's integration into the Canadian military was largely seen as something that was sorted, CAF has been dealing with issues of sexual misconduct where a large number of those reporting the misconduct have been women.</p>
<b>Gov</b>	<p>Government.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about interaction with government actors such as the Prime Minister. This would be a subset of CIMIC code because it refers to civil-military relations.</p>
<b>H</b>	<p>History.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that share information about historical events such as WWI, WWII, Korean War, etc. Remembrance Day ceremonies would count (even though that also falls under the Event code and a ceremony as per Cerem code).</p>
<b>Hero</b>	<p>Hero(es)/heroism.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention heroes, heroic action, and/or heroism. These are constructions of what it means to be a hero for the military, which is a somewhat special category because of the risk that is inherent in the job. There is a perception of all military personnel as heroes. The selective usage of the term by the military itself helps to play down the overuse of the term, particularly in relation to military personnel.</p> <p>This code could be considered a subset of the Qualities code because heroism is a kind of a quality, and the heroes mentioned, who are usually those who served, also embody particular qualities that make a hero.</p>
<b>Honour</b> <b>or</b> <b>HR</b>	<p>Honour.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention honour in some way. This usually happens in multiple ways.</p> <p>First, honour as esteem (almost a subset of the Pride code), e.g., Tweet # 607890393590546432 mentions the honour of serving one's country. Second (and flowing from the first to some extent), honour as respect, e.g., Tweet # 562370473041076225 that honours the military</p>

	<p>contributions of Black Canadians during Black History Month or Tweet # 575650115857354752 about Canadians honouring Sgt. Andrew Doiron as he was repatriated after being killed in action in Iraq (also coded as loss) or Tweet # 598544411224580096 about eight Canadian soldiers whose remains from World War I were buried with full military honours.</p> <p>This code is also interesting because honour is something that is often associated with military service as a matter of course. When military organizations or personnel act in dishonourable ways, it usually comes as a shock to society, for example, the Somalia incident put a dark mark on CAF.</p>
<b>Imp</b>	<p>Impact.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that discuss the impact of the organization in places where it is working. The impact is generally cited as an improvement in the conditions for the people. For example, Tweet # 574948433569710080 that mentions how the future is brighter now for 2.5 million girls in Afghanistan due to the Canadian contribution to the intervention. The implication being that these girls would be able to go to school and therefore, have a better future thanks to the educational opportunities made possible by the ISAF mission against the Taliban. The tweet was also generated around the time of the International Women’s Day, so the tweet was thematically relevant. Other examples include operations like CTF 150 where the RCN contributes to maritime security and captures drugs and weapons caches, and operations like Op SIRONA where CAF acted in a non-combat capacity to fight the spread of Ebola in Sierra Leone. The Partnership and Not War codes, in particular, speak to the impact or improvement that CAF’s contributions to various operations have.</p>
<b>Inj</b>	<p>Injured.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention injured and ill soldiers and in some cases, members of the public. Inj (O) refers to tweets about injured soldiers in particular.</p> <p>This code can be seen as a subset of the Fit code because it talks about the absence or reduction of Fitness and Health for some people.</p>
<b>IR</b>	<p>International Relations.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that comment on the state of international relations. This includes retweets. E.g. MND Rob Nicholson’s tweet about how Russia should back off of Ukraine was retweeted by CAF.</p>
<b>J</b>	<p>Jargon.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that mention military language that would not be easily decipherable by a non-military audience. E.g. BZ or Bravo Zulu, CBG (Canadian Brigade Group), etc.</p> <p>There are places where this jargon is explained: See p. 5 CF Tweet 552827579678593024 --- #AcronymDecoder with link to a webpage that describes what JAG is and does.</p>

	<p>Where it is not explained, however, it gives a sense of “setting themselves apart” or “elite group,” that is, only those who are “cool” enough to know what the #BZ means will understand the full meaning a tweet that uses that hashtag. This can work in three ways: first, the jargon acts to construct a military organization as something separate from the rest of society because of this special language; second, such jargon acknowledges the military identity of those who “get” the jargon without having to search what the term means; and third, the jargon can act as an enticement to non-members to join this “in-group.”</p> <p>See Memo on Jargon/Accomplishments.</p>
<b>Job</b>	<p>Jobs.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that mention job opportunities with the Canadian Armed Forces and the related Ministry of National Defence.</p> <p>Some of the enticements offered are paid education, technical training (a lot of the jobs that are RT'd by CAF are often technically oriented jobs: aircraft or ship technician, doctor, etc.), and leadership (that is, the opportunity to lead an infantry or other people).</p>
<b>Loss</b>	<p>Loss.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that mention loss of Canadian Armed Forces personnel’s lives, including tweets that mention condolences, prayers, etc. for the person that’s passed away (I could only see the tweets that the CAF accounts retweeted). Some of these overlap with history when the personnel mentioned are ones who were lost in older battles, World War I or II, or peacekeeping efforts.</p> <p>There are also a few tweets about remains of soldiers being found. The importance of these tweets is that they mention the ultimate sacrifice of these soldiers in service of the country. These tweets then capture the greatest price that soldiers must pay in the line of duty, and this in turn emphasizes the dangerous nature of the military’s work.</p> <p>Also, the historical and recent losses are often hashtagged #RememberThem, which connects the past and present lost soldiers. There is then a sub-narrative of loss and sacrifice within the larger narrative of national defence.</p> <p>Losses can be further categorized as internal loss reference and external loss reference insofar as references and tributes to slain soldiers that come from the organization itself vs. tributes that come from outside the organization. Internal loss reference is from CAF and any of its environments. External loss reference is condolences from the DND, the Minister of National Defence, other ministers, other paramilitary forces/officers (police, RCMP, etc.), etc.</p>
<b>Media or</b>	<p>Media other than CAF’s own media and multimedia coverage.</p> <p>Refers to CAF’s retweets of other media sources. The loss of Sgt. Andrew Doiron, for example, was covered by CTV, CBC, etc. and CAF retweeted their coverage related tweets.</p>

<b>Med</b>	
<b>Mem</b>	<p>Memory.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about remembrance and memory. Hashtags such as #LestWeForget, #RememberThem, and others are indicators of memory tweets. The monuments code (see below) also connects to this code because monuments are also spaces of remembrance.</p> <p>This code is important because it requires a direct action, that is, the reader is asked to remember or not forget the service provided by the military to Canada.</p> <p>There are also connections to the Loss code (for those who lay down their lives), the Event code (Remembrance Day, Veterans Day, Canada Day), the History code (remembering the long gone or more recent past and its events such as the World Wars), and the War and Hero codes (as loss of life and acts of courage during war are often remembered in the tweets).</p>
<b>Mon</b>	<p>Monuments.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention monuments such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Vimy Ridge (this is both a place and the name of a battle, so may not exactly fit here), the statue of John McCrae, etc.</p> <p>Monuments are physical spaces where the memory of particular events is realized in words and/or images, sculptures, other forms of art. They act as both as space of reminiscence and succour for the older generations as well as a reminder to younger generations. Their mention on social media, however, may not have the same impact because of the virtual nature of cyberspace itself and the lack of the physicality of the monument. It could be argued, however, that for those who have visited a particular monument or know about its history (or can learn about it through links provided in the tweets), the stories that these monuments tell can have an impact.</p>
<b>News</b>	<p>News.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that provide information about new and important organizational information and events. This code can include tweets about government announcements regarding budget allocations for military infrastructure improvement, security and defence meetings (domestic and international), etc.</p>
<b>NW</b>	<p>Not War Operations.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets about non-combat operations. e.g. Search and Rescue (SAR or S&amp;R), disaster relief, etc.</p> <p>These tweets can be particularly engaging for the public because these operations usually require the military to work directly with the public and help people out of difficult situations. SAR operations might have a somewhat limited impact because these operations are focused on a smaller number of people. Disaster relief operations, particularly international operations, often get more attention because of the scale of the problem and also because other media are also updating the</p>

	public about the disaster and the military's role in providing relief.
<b>NWD</b>	Domestic Not War Operations. Refers to any tweets about non-combat operations that happen within Canada. E.g. Army assistance during the Fort McMurray fire, SAR operations to protect our own citizen(s), etc.
<b>NW/W</b>	Not War/War operations. Refers to tweets about operations that CAF engages in that cannot be classified as war or peacekeeping operations. The most common example of this is Op CARIBBE which is Canada's participation in a multinational campaign against trafficking in the Caribbean sea and the eastern Pacific Ocean. These operations are not direct enemy engagement, but they can play a role in supporting active kinetic operations. By preventing criminal transport of goods, and therefore, the subsequent sale of these goods, these operations play a role in interrupting the flow of funds from the sale of trafficked goods to terrorist or other criminal organizations that in turn might be funding terrorist activity. Thus, these operations have implications for the warfighting capabilities of certain enemies.
<b>O</b>	Organization. Refers to any tweets that share information about the organization. E.g., what the organization does, who makes up the organization (regiments, ships, squadrons), what military events the organization celebrates (presenting of colours to a regiment, other regimental honours, etc. — see also Cerem and Domestic Event (DV) code) This is important because the organization is in essence talking about itself to the public. See also S (Statement) and N (Name)
<b>O (-)</b>	Organization (Negative). Refers to any tweets that mention negative comments about the organization or refer to negative incidents such as sexual misconduct in CAF. Although often what these negative tweets also do is mention only the positive information about negative news. For example, CAF tweets about the positive steps the military is taking to tackle sexual misconduct instead of sharing more information about the statistics or the spaces and instances where the military did not do enough. These tweets rarely share the stories of those who experienced assault or how they were treated. Thus, even as the negative is acknowledged, it is acknowledged in order to highlight the positive steps taken to counter the issue.
<b>O.F</b>	Organizational function. Refers to things that the military does. The training and partnership operations domestically and internationally, and defending the state's sovereignty are all functions of the military organization.



	<p>Sometimes these functions are listed categorically, but mostly they are assumed or at least not categorically stated. So the codes Partnership and Training could be seen as subsets of the organizational functions code because it is what the military does. These codes, however, need to stand on their own as well because of how primary they are with respect to the total number of tweets that refer to either partnership or training or both. So even as they may be considered subsets of the category organizational function, they are quite important enough to be considered independent categories as well. The O.F could refer to other functions that are rarely so explicitly stated as surveillance and cybersecurity are mentioned in the tweets below.</p> <p>For example, see what the following tweets mention:  568773282205466624 mentions protecting our sovereignty (see code SOV)  568773304997289984 mentions maritime surveillance (see code Surveil)  568773322797924352 mentions Arctic surveillance (see code Surveil)  568773344687988736 mentions cyber security (see code Cyber)  See also Retweets as Endorsements Memo.</p>
<b>O.N</b>	<p>Name.  Refers to any tweets that share the name of a unit, regiment, ship, etc. Could be seen as a subset of the Organization code because name refers back to the organization (self-reference) and helps familiarize the public with the various parts of the military.</p>
<b>O.P</b>	<p>People.  Refers to any tweets that mention officers or non-commissioned members (NCMs), e.g., Meet Sgt. Hall an instructor at RCAF academy, Cpl. Dyer one of the first Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, etc.  These tweets might be important because they identify a single individual, usually with a photo. The tweets then either mention a little bit about these individuals or provide a link to story about them. In some cases, the individual is part of video, so there is a “face-to-face” experience with the person mentioned. While such tweets and their associated multimedia are not enough to create an interpersonal relationship with the featured personnel, they do provide a human face to the military, that is, they create a sense in the reader’s mind of who it is that works in the military and what it is that they do.</p>
<b>O.S</b>	<p>Statement.  Refers to any tweets that share any statements made by military commanders and other military personnel as well as any statements by related actors such as the Governor General (who is also the Commander-in-Chief) or the Minister of National Defence.  Could be seen as a subset of Organization code because these tweets amplify the voices of those who make up the organization, and in the</p>

	process, they create a clearer picture of what the organization stands for.
<b>PE</b>	Public Engagement. Refers to tweets where CAF seeks public input. For example, the #CaptionThis hashtag asks members of the public to caption particular photos or at the end of the year, CAF asks members of the public to vote for their favourite photo of the year. There are overlaps of this code with O.EV because when the Canadian Army organizes its annual run they encourage public participation.
<b>PT</b>	Partnership. Refers to any tweets about partners and collaborators like NATO, NORAD, local defence forces working with CAF (e.g. Afghan National Army working with CAF would count as a PT tweet). Sometimes partnership is invoked not by directly mentioning allies, but instead by mentioning the names of operations and exercises the military is engaged in. For instance, a tweet about #OpIMPACT might not name the United States and/or other members of the Middle East Stabilization Force directly; however, the tweet references partnership insofar as Operation Impact is CAF's contribution to the multinational collaborative operations against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Similarly, hashtags or mentions of joint exercises hint at the partnership being developed among Canada and its allies through training together. Training together is also a means of improving interoperability, which is "the ability of different military organisations to conduct joint operations. These organisations can be of different nationalities or different armed services (ground, naval and air forces) or both" (NATO 2006).
<b>PD</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>PT(D)</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>D.PT</b>	Domestic Partnership. Refers to any tweets about domestic partners and collaborators like local businesses, business persons, corporations, community, etc. This code also includes the participation of military actors in local/community events (see also domestic events code), e.g., the participation of the RCN in Carnaval de Quebec's Ice Canoe Race. This code can also include events (see domestic events code) where the military invites the participation of the public in events organized by the military, e.g., the annual Army and Air Force Runs.
<b>PK</b>	Peacekeeping. Refers to any tweets that mention peacekeeping. This code is treated as separate from both the Partnership code as well as the Not War operations code because peacekeeping often occurs under the UN flag which is an institution that Canada contributes to instead of partnering with and because peacekeeping, while it is not necessarily similar to war and conflict operations, it is not always a peaceful operational environment either. It occupies a somewhat unique place, not only as a tool in international diplomacy, but also as a military operation that

	<p>requires the maintenance of peace with military presence but with limited kinetic capabilities that can only be applied in “self-defence or defence of the mandate.” Nonetheless, these operations can and do lead to kinetic engagement, e.g., Battle of Medak Pocket, and therefore, cannot be considered non-combat operations.</p>
<b>Pride</b>	<p>Pride/proud.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention Canadian’s pride or how proud Canadians or the military is and/or should be about particular achievements. See Tweet # 588474841927385088 that is a quote about how the military has made Canadians proud through its service. The tweet links to an external link that indicates that the quote comes from then MND Jason Kenney about the “exceptional” work that the RCN did on Op CARIBBE.</p> <p>The Awards code is related to this code because often pride is mentioned in the context of some accolade or achievement of the military.</p> <p>This code could partially be a subset of the Qualities code because it is a quality that is acknowledged as worth having (as long as it is not narcissistic) as per the Canadian Army ad tagline of “Strong. Proud. Ready.” Pride can be taken in two ways: first, as a quality to have (Canadians’ pride in the military), and second, a state of being (a proud Army).</p>
<b>PSA</b>	<p>Public Service Announcement.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets that deal with public service issues. E.g. Information about flybys at football games, information about public issues, etc.</p> <p>There are some subsets of PSAs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PSAs that provide information about events such as flybys that have an impact on the day-to-day of people’s existence, e.g., a flyby may interrupt a child’s nap time or cause brief interruption to a meeting.</li> <li>2. PSAs that invite engagement in issues that affect a variety of Canadians, e.g., mental and physical fitness. The Canadian Army does the annual Army Run, which promoted physical fitness. The Bell Let’s Talk campaign for mental health is also heavily promoted by the Canadian Armed Forces. The mental health support and destigmatization is particularly relevant for CAF. Firstly, because the military is often a high stress environment, both serving and retired or medically discharged members need to be able to access mental health services without the stigma. Secondly, associating the need for mental health support as something universal that even “tough” military personnel need, CAF plays a role in destigmatizing mental health issues.</li> </ol> <p>The PSA code can be seen as a subset of the Direct Communication code because the communication is directed directly at the public. The mental health PSAs like the ones for Bell Let’s Talk can be seen</p>

	as a subset of the Fit code as well.
<b>Pub. Supp.</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>PSp</b>	Public Support. Refers to tweets discussing public support for Canadian military missions (conflict and peacekeeping) as well as their non-combat operations (search and rescue, disaster relief, etc.). This comes up a lot in the CDA Institute retweets on the main CAF Twitter account. This code is related to the Research code because public support usually needs to be measured through research (it is not always easily obvious without some sort of survey or poll being conducted).
<b>Q</b>	Questions. Refers to tweets that are posed as questions to CAF by the public, or questions that CAF has asked of the public. This code would be a subset of the Direct Communication code.
<b>Qual.</b>	Qualities. Refers to tweets that mention qualities of the organization and/or its personnel. For example, Tweet #572780139030814720 where the RCN describes itself as “Adaptive and agile.” The Canadian Army hashtag #StrongProudReady, which is based on the Canadian Army tagline: “Strong. Proud. Ready.” also refers to qualities of the organization or the qualities of the personnel or both. There are retweets of RCAF’s profiles of courage related to the Battle of Britain that share the stories of pilots during WWII. In this way, this code introduces characteristics of the military organization in an anthropomorphic manner. It can be understood as a way to “humanize” the organization (and to some extent the personnel as well because the “tough” military persona can make the soldier appear somewhat above the rest, somewhat more than mere human). Certainly, the O.P codes refers to the personnel that serve with the organization, and that is one way to humanize the organization by sharing how those who serve are just like the public they serve. However, by somewhat anthropomorphizing the organization, the organization as a whole is humanized. Can be seen as a subset of the Organization code insofar as it tells the public about what kind of qualities the organization possesses.
<b>Ref</b>	Refugees. Refers to tweets about the Syrian refugee crisis, particularly the assistance that CAF provided with the transportation for the refugees. These tweets also highlight the CIMIC code insofar as they show how well CAF collaborated with the civilian agencies and departments involved with the various administrative aspects of getting the refugees to Canada.
<b>Roy</b>	Royalty. Refers to tweets that mention CAF’s interactions with members of the

	British monarchy. It could be considered a subset of the History code in that it is Canadian history that connects CAF to the British monarchy as well as the British military history.
<b>Rsch</b>	Research. Refers to any tweets about academic research in the field of defence. The tweets either give information about new research and development at the DRDC, potential grants, or other opportunities such as workshops, conferences, etc. Includes tweets about the Halifax International Security Forum and other fora where defence and security matters are discussed.
<b>Soc Med</b>  <b>or</b>  <b>SM</b>	Social Media. Refers to tweets about social media. Tweet # 254333092356030465 explains to an irate follower why the Canadian Army provided a link to Facebook for the photo of the week instead of posting the picture on Twitter (paucity of word space on Twitter for a caption). There are also tweets such as tweet # 245948241479356416 that provide information about how personnel can and should keep their information safe on social media. Such tweets are meta in that they talk about the need for caution regarding social media on social media.
<b>Sov</b>	Sovereignty. Refers to tweets that mention the issue of sovereignty. Most of the sovereignty mentions are in reference to Canadian sovereignty and the role that CAF plays in protecting that sovereignty. These references also usually came from <i>outside</i> CAF such as from then Minister of National Defence Jason Kenney (note that as a civilian responsible for the civilian component of national security, that is, the Department of National Defence, Kenney is considered outside CAF. The same consideration might not work for the current MND Harjit Sajjan because he's ex-military). The mention of sovereignty and its protection is interesting because there have been limited threats historically to Canadian sovereignty, really only the War of 1812. The greatest threat to Canadian sovereignty would be the US should it decide to annex Canada, and if it does, CAF would not be able oppose the capabilities of the US forces. Other threats might emerge as the Arctic melts, but even then we will need the US as our ally to defeat states like Russia should they choose to threaten Canadian sovereignty from the North. CAF, due to its limited size and capability, could only play an assistive role in maintaining the sovereignty of Canada. However, the tweets that mention Canadian sovereignty make it sound like CAF is much stronger and quite capable of defending Canada all by itself. While this may be true if Canada was attacked by a smaller state with limited resources, this claim likely would not hold for a more resourceful state like Russia or China. Of course, I am not arguing that either Russia or

	<p>China or any other country are going to attack Canada (If that were to happen, the US would likely step up to defend Canada in the name of North American defence). The point to be noted here is that civilian politicians can occasionally make claims to inflate the sense of national pride, patriotic fervour, and/or pride in the national armed forces, claims that may or may not be rooted in the capability of the military in fact.</p> <p>Such civilian/ministerial claim making is also interesting in light of the consistent budget reduction experienced by CAF. Thus, the minister is claiming that CAF is ready to protect national sovereignty, but without clarifying that the readiness refers to the will of CAF personnel, not the military capability of the forces, that is, CAF personnel are ready to fight for and defend Canadian sovereignty, but their willingness is not matched by the equipment and other military capabilities.</p> <p>A historical example of this is the claims of Canada as peacekeeper to the world in the 80s and 90s where the civilian governments liked the idea of seeing themselves as peacekeepers and thus, approved CAF's participation in various UN peace missions without increasing the defence budgets to ensure that the military had the necessary resources to participate in those missions (see also Hillier's or Mackenzie's reference to the CANDO team in Egypt that was hamstrung by requiring to refer any and all decisionmaking to Ottawa).</p>
<p><b>Spirit</b></p>	<p>Spiritual/religious.</p> <p>Refers to tweets about spiritual and/or religious matters. For example, Tweet # 580005292311625728 refers to how spiritual guidance can improve resiliency in the forces.</p> <p>This code can be seen as a subset of the Fitness code insofar as it is an aspect of well-being. Seen in light of the Diversity code, however, the tweet mentioned above highlights the gaps in the spiritual care provision in CAF with limited non-Christian pastoral care providers.</p>
<p><b>Sport</b></p>	<p>Sport.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets about sports and sporting events, especially sporting games that are played as CAF Appreciation games.</p> <p>Tweeting about sport seems to bank on the popularity of sporting events and sports teams to further the CF's tweets and to attract attention to the military, even if it is tangentially. Is it the idea of building patriotic or even nationalistic fervour on the back of the "team spirit" that is aroused during games?</p>
<p><b>TR</b></p>	<p>Training and Preparedness.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets about getting or being prepared, training, and learning such as tweets about training exercises.</p> <p>These exercises internationally are usually conducted in conjunction with other NATO member nations' militaries, so there is partnership here as well. Nonetheless, preparedness requires a separate code because it is about the condition of the military's readiness.</p>

	<p>The commonality of preparedness and partnership indicates two things: first, it reiterates the point that the Canadian military can hardly act alone on the international stage because of how small the military is as well as the middle power status of the state, and second, it brings home the point that the military needs to focus on interoperability with other states, not only because of how small the military is, but also because the conflict situation around the world is shifting into more network-centric mode, where being able to adjust to new team and work with others on short notice would be valuable skill to have. A topic that comes up in the discussion of training is the idea of conflict in urban environments. There is, thus, an awareness in CAF of the changing nature of conflict, and they are certainly attempting to prepare their personnel for urban warfare based on some the training related tweets. Cyberwarfare comes up much less frequently, and there is little information shared on how CAF is tackling the issue of cyber attacks or preparing for cyber conflict. There are tweets about precaution around social media usage, particularly for protecting personnel and their families from being targeted by violent non-state actors; however, these are basic guidelines that do not tackle the larger issue. So far, there has been no discussion around radicalization through Internet and social media platforms either. CAF does try to recruit through their own tweets about opportunities with CAF and the benefits such as job could provide, but they do not touch upon the issue of violent non-state actors' recruitment efforts online. This may simply be a matter of avoiding the social, political, and cultural quagmire that is the agenda and propaganda of violent non-state actors, but there may be something to taking the bull by the horns.</p>
<b>TD</b>	<p>Domestic Training and Preparedness. Refers to any tweets about getting or being prepared, training, and learning about the Canadian terrain and operational conditions. E.g. Op Nunavut</p>
<b>Tech</b>	<p>Technology. Refers to tweets that mention technology either as it is <u>used by</u> the military or the <u>skills needed</u> to operate or maintain technology. The former usually shows up in relation to the Research code or Equipment code when the military acquires new technology and introduces it to the public via tweet (see Tweet # 573649271322374145 re: how cutting edge simulation technology is used for training). The latter shows up in the ForcesJobs tweets retweeted by CAF where the tweets mention the need for skilled technicians in CAF or that the acquisition of technical skills is free (i.e., paid education) if you join CAF.</p>
<b>TL</b>	<p>Tough Life. Refers to tweets that mention the tough life that CAF personnel have to occasionally lead, enduring through extremely difficult weather conditions. For example, Tweet # 570591142296858624</p>

	<p>570585731476918272mentions how Canadian and US soldiers trained in the severe cold at Lake Winnipeg.</p> <p>Could potentially be seen as a subset of the Hero code insofar as it speaks to the difficulties all CAF personnel face in the execution of their duty. It can be argued that the word Hero is thrown around too much, so perhaps this code could simply be seen as an extension of the Fitness code in that CAF personnel need to be physically fit to defend Canada’s North. It could also be seen as an extension of the Quality code in that it takes a particular mental toughness to be able to tackle the kind of extreme conditions that military personnel often face. With respect to toughness as a quality, we can read this code as leading into the #StrongProudReady hashtag with a depiction of the military personnels’ strength in difficult conditions.</p> <p>What is missing, so far, is any reference to the difficulties that the military personnel encounter when dealing with difficult social, cultural, political, and/or economic conditions. In other words, there is an absence or silence here about particular kinds of difficulties. Certainly, the issue of mental health, PTSD, physical fitness, etc. are discussed, but these are issues/challenges that exist within the domestic context, i.e., what happens after military personnel are back in Canada. There is not much discussion, so far, of how the language barriers, cultural differences, etc. can and do create barriers that can make CAF personnels’ lives difficult.</p>
<p><b>TR(O)</b></p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p><b>O.TR</b></p>	<p>Other Training and Preparedness.</p> <p>Refers to any tweets about Canadian Armed Forces personnel teaching or training members of other militaries. E.g. training Ukrainian forces as part of Op Reassurance</p>
<p><b>Thx</b></p>	<p>Thanks.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that either directly thank or express gratitude or appreciation.</p> <p>Tx (Pub): Refers to tweets that thank the public, e.g., for help with fundraising during Canada Army Run, for writing letters to soldiers, etc.</p> <p>Tx (O): Refers to tweets thanking members of the organization itself, that is, self-referential thanks.</p> <p>Thanks to the public can also be seen as a subset of the Organizational Statement (O.S) code because the organization thanking the public is one of many statements that the organization makes.</p>
<p><b>UN</b></p>	<p>United Nations.</p> <p>Refers to tweets that mention the UN and its agencies. These references come up usually in the form of information on either UN peacekeeping missions or UN humanitarian missions of which CAF is a part, such as the UN peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Peninsula or the UN Stabilization mission in Haiti.</p>



<p><b>Vet</b></p>	<p>Veterans Refers to tweets that mention veterans. The Veterans Affairs Canada site defines veterans as “Any former member of the Canadian Armed Forces who successfully underwent basic training and is honourably discharged.” Thus, retired members of CAF are also considered veterans, and the term does not just refer to war veterans. So far, on Twitter, however, the references to veterans are largely in the context of wars, that is, war veterans, particularly with the hashtag #RememberThem that is usually associated with Remembrance Day, an event that honours soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty (this could happen in peacekeeping operations or other non-combat operations, so it doesn’t only refer to war veterans, but because of the popular association of Remembrance Day with the World Wars and Korean War, there might be a public perception that the veterans and soldiers being honoured on November 11 are only the war veterans.).</p>
<p><b>Vol</b></p>	<p>Volunteering and volunteers. Refers to tweets that call for volunteers, share information about volunteering, and/or thank the volunteers.</p>
<p><b>W</b></p>	<p>War and conflict operations. Refers to tweets that mention direct warfighting. For instance, tweets about Op Impact, CAF’s contribution to the coalition fighting ISIL in Iraq, are often about air strikes and how many have been on target and how the airstrike campaign is a success. The other code that mentions direct fighting is the History code, where the mentions of the World Wars and other kinetic operations are directly about fighting. There are, of course, intersections with the Partnership code because Canada, as a middle power country with limited defence resources, cannot engage in war on its own. There are intersections also with the Training code because most of the training that the soldiers are shown as receiving on Twitter is for fighting in kinetic operations. There is some SAR training or avalanche prevention training as well, but largely the training is directed at improving warfighting skills and interoperability (Partnership code again).</p>