Canadian Forces in Domestic Olympic Security Initiatives
Past, Present and Future

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The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games Security’s public goal was to emphasize sport over security. However, in order to emphasize the fellowship of sport at the event, careful focus had to be placed on keeping those who wished to cause a stir from doing so. Additional emphasis on security was also a concern owing to the proximity of the 2010 Games to the United States. The current global climate has meant that those who were in charge of 2010 Olympic security sometimes needed to think outside of the perceivable limits in order to prepare and implement safety measures. Yet upon conducting a significant amount of research into media coverage from before and during the Vancouver Olympic Games, there is little mention of Canadian Forces (CF) participation. The goal of this essay is to assess the security role of the Canadian Forces at the Olympic Games in 2010, to discuss the CF’s role in its past Olympic games in Montreal in 1976, and discuss the future of the CF in domestic security events.

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic security plan was not unusual in terms of how decision-making power was delegated. The RCMP was given the contract to head security for the Games with the Canadian Forces (CF), Department of National Defence, municipal police units, and the private sector all supporting the operation. Yet the Canadian Forces at Vancouver 2010 were not operating under the command of the RCMP. An RCMP officer or another member of the Joint Task Force Games (JTFG) could ask a CF member to do something, but if this request was determined by CF officers to be outside of their mandate, the request would then need to be forwarded to the commanding officer and the plan adjusted appropriately. This system is not unprecedented or even unusual in domestic security operations; the Montreal 1976 Olympics, for

example, operated on essentially the same premise. As far as the CF was concerned, the main differences between the Montreal Games, in which the CF was heavily involved in with the RCMP, and the Vancouver Games was simply the magnitude of the security effort in 2010 and the degree to which other security parties were involved. The Vancouver Olympics were the first in Canada to include so many different security groups integrated so efficiently and completely that the ISU “blurred the lines between police, military and emergency management personnel.”

To gain a clear perspective on how deeply involved the CF became in the Vancouver Games, it is helpful to compare the 2010 security effort to that of the Montreal Games in 1976. The state of affairs in Montreal was different from that of Vancouver in 2010, as the perceived security threat was higher at the time of the 1976 games. Montreal six years prior to its Olympic Games had found itself in the midst of the October Crisis where symbols of an Anglophone presence in Quebec and federal political figures appeared to be, and in many instances were, the target of FLQ terrorism. In light of both the recent FLQ crisis and the massacre at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, the Canadian Forces were sent into Montreal to provide security for the games. They were not always received with the warmest welcome. This dislike of the CF was particularly pronounced in French-dominated east Montreal, as Colonel Paul Crober explained in his interview: “Army, Navy and Air force identities were suppressed ... on the east side, sometimes people would throw rocks at you.”

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3 Crober, Colonel (ret) F. Paul (Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force Games HQ), interview by Rebecca McCarthy. March 24, 2011.
6 Crober, interview.
the military as a consequence of the recently-ended US involvement in the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{7} Regardless the CF were positioned in the “Big O” stadium and around the athletes’ village. Fences were erected around the village in order to protect the athletes and prevent a recurrence of the attacks which had resulted in the death of the Israeli athletes at Munich just four years earlier in 1972.\textsuperscript{8} In addition, around the ‘Big O’ Olympic Stadium, CF soldiers were stationed during all events. Colonel Crober recalls watching the decathlon and looking up to see armed soldiers along the perimeter.\textsuperscript{9} Major General Ed Fitch comments that due to the tense atmosphere of the time, citizens were perhaps more willing to tolerate the presence of the armed forces in Montreal,\textsuperscript{10} but as Colonel Crober recalls, this tolerance was only apparent among the English-speaking population of the city.\textsuperscript{11}

Crober, as a young lieutenant in 1976, was not heavily involved in the organization of security for the Montreal Games, but he was assigned to a squadron tasked with protecting the athletes. Although in hindsight there were numerous security breaches, these were not made known to him until a later date, one of which was an attempt on President Gerald Ford’s life by an American citizen who had entered Canada across the Vermont border.\textsuperscript{12} Further research indicates that a similar event did happen, with a man with a history of mental illness, wishing to take the life of Gerald Ford was arrested on July 10\textsuperscript{th} and held in New York State’s Clinton

\textsuperscript{7} Crober, interview.
\textsuperscript{9} Crober, interview.
\textsuperscript{11} Crober, Interview.
\textsuperscript{12} Crober, Interview.
County. The newspaper article states that the person in question’s name was Kenneth Rowe and that he was arrested for hitchhiking. Crober mentioned in further e-mail correspondence that the arrest happened during the Games, but the arrest happened on July 10th, while the Games did not start until July 17th 1976.

Crober also recalls the CF’s role in handling defectors from other countries, particularly athletes from Eastern Europe. The CF’s orders in regards to citizens wishing to seek refugee status or Canadian citizenship were that they would be handed over to the police who would forward them to immigration for processing. Crober remembers two individuals who chose to do this, who came to his squadron from Algeria and Indonesia.

Crober recalls three Canadian brigades participated in the Montreal Games for a total of approximately 16,000 troops in addition to the police who were present. Although the CF at the time was deployed in several overseas missions, including Egypt, Germany, Sinai, Cyprus, and Golan Heights, Major General Ed Fitch, a young Captain stationed in Germany at the time, stated that he received orders to prepare his troops for a plausible return to Canada for the duration of the Montreal Olympics. Fitch says: “I had to talk to my soldiers about the potential of shooting Canadians.” Fitch brings to light the ultimate role of military intervention in domestic security events, something that was emphasized over and over again in both Crober and Fitch’s interviews. The RCMP and local police forces who have different training than the CF in

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14 Crober, e-mail correspondence with the author.
15 Crober, Interview.
16 Crober, Interview.
18 Fitch, Interview.
19 Crober, Interview and Fitch, Interview.
regards to dealing with citizens domestically, know the people with whom they are dealing with in their home city. Coupled with the anti-military sentiments of Eastern Montreal and the perception of the armed forces during the Montreal Games, the decision to have the military take a non-confrontational role unless called upon by the RCMP was one best made for both the domestic and international situation.\textsuperscript{20}

International politics that called Canadian troops overseas during the Montreal Olympics, occurred again in 2010, but for different reasons. Regardless, Canada found itself in a position where troops had been deployed to Afghanistan and yet a major military presence was required at home. Questions as to how the CF was going to handle these demands were raised by the media\textsuperscript{21} and questions soon arose as to whether the mission in Afghanistan was going to be compromised or outsourced.\textsuperscript{22} When posed questions by myself, as to how the CF planned on managing the Afghan mission and the Games, both Major General Fitch and Colonel Crober stated that it would be handled, and not compromised. Major General Fitch went on to explain that the army currently employs a form of ‘rotation’ for their troops by which one third of available personnel would be deployed, one third in recovery from deployment, and the other third preparing to be deployed. In this system, approximately two thirds of the available army personnel would be on home ground, while one third served overseas.\textsuperscript{23} In this way, the CF was able to manage the tasks at hand with over one third of the forces available. Crober also mentioned an article that he had seen regarding outsourcing CF tasks to a private company in order to maintain the numbers in Afghanistan while the Olympics were happening in

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{20} New York Times “MONTREAL WEIGHS ITS '76 OLYMPICS” \textit{New York Times} (1923-Current file); Sep 8, 1972; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2007) pg. 1
\bibitem{23} Fitch, interview.
\end{thebibliography}
Vancvouer.\textsuperscript{24} He insists that the idea of outsourcing is preposterous and that at no point were the CF considering this as an option.\textsuperscript{25}

As with all modern Olympic events, the security task force attends Games prior to their event to see what works for those particular nations and to take helpful hints or ideas. The two Games that occurred after Vancouer won the bid were Torino in 2006 and Bejing in 2008. When asked about whether the CF found the security at either of these events helpful for their project, both Crober and Fitch emphasized the differences between these two countries and Canada. Torino’s military force was visible during their games, and Crober highlights the ability of the Italian government to provide this manpower and not have it affect the tasks that their military is able to provide otherwise.\textsuperscript{26} In Bejing, Fitch pointed to the power that the Chinese government has over the general public, citing examples of how Bejing was able to harness their pollution problems. In order to cut Bejing’s automobile pollution in half, the Chinese government passed a law saying that those whose licence plates ending in an odd number were able to drive on odd days in the calendar year, and those whose plates ending in an even number were able to drive on even days.\textsuperscript{27} This kind of option is not available to the Canadian government, and those who went to Bejing to inspect their security measures came back shaking their heads saying “‘We can’t use anything.’”\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{24} TorStar News Service. “Upcoming military burden may require soldier outsourcing.”
\textsuperscript{25} Crober, interview.
\textsuperscript{26} Crober, interview.
\textsuperscript{27} Fitch, interview.
\textsuperscript{28} Fitch, interview.
Even with a significant of CF personnel available to be deployed in the Vancouver area, extensive preparations had to be undertaken in order to coordinate a security plan for the Games. One tactic applied to the Vancouver Games was called “Red-Teaming”. This was adopted by the CF as a means of assisting the planning committee in preparing for different threat scenarios that might appear at the Olympics, including environmental problems. Red-Team planning has long been used in the United States military and harkens back to a time when war games were conducted to assist with tactical development. The ‘red’ component is representative of the Soviet flag during the Cold War, and in these exercises the opposition at the time operated under the ‘blue’ NATO flag. Adapted for the Olympics by Major General Fitch, the tactic takes a team of experts and asks them to think about how they would go about causing havoc at the Olympics. Due to the magnitude of the Olympic project, Fitch and his team thought up numerous scenarios including well-planned and unexpected air, land, or sea strikes. One plan envisioned a foreign enemy in the Greater Vancouver area during the time of the Olympics. This theoretical enemy had come to Canada within the year after Vancouver won the Olympic bid, entering the country by claiming refugee status or immigrating. From this point on, the theoretical enemy had adopted a typical Canadian lifestyle, working at McDonald’s or another low profile occupation and using the money he earned to pay for his lifestyle and to obtain the resources required to create any number of bombs or other means of creating public disturbances while he or she waits for support to come from overseas closer to the time of the Games. After developing this “enemy” and designing his mode of attack, the Red Team was then given the opportunity to see the security plans developed by the Blue Team. The Red Team would then read these documents and find operational holes or determine adjustments that would need to be made to the security plans in the event that this worst case scenario came to fruition.²⁹

²⁹ Fitch, interview.
With the assistance of Red-Teaming, the Blue Team, or the Integrated Security Unit (ISU), was able to come up with a feasible area in which to exercise control over for the duration of the Games. The area in question (Figure 1) covered the Gulf Islands and up the Vancouver Island coastline to Comox, as far east as Chilliwack and as far north as Pemberton. The area patrolled by the CF during the Olympics was mainly in the Whistler area and along the Sea to Sky Highway, as well as in the Greater Vancouver area around the Olympic Venues acting in support of the RCMP (Figure 2). In total, an area of approximately $3000 \text{ km}^2$ needed to be covered in order to ensure maximum security.\(^{30}\)

The CF also made use of Indigenous knowledge of the Whistler ‘back 40’ area. When developing and scouting the area in which they would patrol during the Games, Indigenous guides were employed to point out geographical anomalies, and sacred ground that needed to be avoided. Different routes were charted if it was required that patrols must go through either of these spaces.\(^{31}\) This was made out of respect to the Four Host Nations in the region who had agreed to be part of the Olympic planning committee.\(^{32}\) The Four Host First Nations groups agreed to be a part of the Olympic planning committee in order to showcase the diversity and individuality of Canada’s First Peoples. This co-operation between the Four Host First Nations and the other organizers, including the CF, shows the mutual respect and understanding that each group had for the other in regards to their cultural knowledge, and roles in security in order to execute a safe event.

\(^{30}\) Col. Paul Crober (ret) e-mail correspondence with author.
\(^{31}\) Crober, interview.
The CF utilized their large naval fleet to patrol the waters in the Salish Sea. With their headquarters located near Stanley Park and in the harbour, the Navy was able to patrol the three areas outlined in Figure 3. In addition they provided assistance to the RCMP in underwater search and explosive ordnance disposal operations.\textsuperscript{33} The United States Navy and Coast Guard also assisted in patrolling the waters around Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.\textsuperscript{34}

The air component included both fighter jets and helicopters for both fast and slow operations. Technology that has been used in missions such as Afghanistan and others was tested at the Games, and CF18 jets were equipped with a gyroscopic camera. Maëlle Ricker was the subject matter expert in one of these tests and noted that the capabilities of the camera was so good that “you could see the snow flying up as she [Ricker] would skid back and forth on her way down to win the gold medal” from 7000 feet.\textsuperscript{35} The CF also utilized a hot air balloon equipped with a surveillance camera that patrolled the athlete’s village.\textsuperscript{36} Figure 2 depicts the area in which the CF patrolled with each ring indicating a different security level. The second level extends approximately 50 kilometres into the United States. In this area, NORAD organized surveillance was carried out with the assistance of the United States.\textsuperscript{37}

The CF additionally provided direct assistance to the athletes as they accepted their medals, a role that was undertaken at the request of VANOC.\textsuperscript{38} The persons assigned this


\textsuperscript{34} Johnson. “Olympic Security doesn’t stop at the Canadian Border.”

\textsuperscript{35} Crober, interview.


\textsuperscript{37} Johnson. “Olympic Security doesn’t stop at the Canadian Border.”

\textsuperscript{38} Colonel (ret) F. Paul Crober. “Joint Task Force Games: An “Olympian” Effort. Article for Larry Pearse”. In the author’s possession. Sent to Rebecca McCarthy electronically via Microsoft Word file March 25, 2011.
particular ceremonial task did so while wearing the official volunteer uniform of the Vancouver Olympics so as not to draw attention to themselves and their affiliation with the CF. This attention to subtlety on the part of the CF at the Olympics was a far cry from Montreal where, as mentioned previously, the CF were in uniform patrolling and at venues in full sight of the public. The tasks designated to the CF in 2010 began with the announcement of the medal recipients. Each medalist, regardless of nation, was assigned a CF member who was to escort them from the location of the event to the location of the ceremony. More often than not, the ceremony was not held immediately after the event itself, so CF personnel were asked to follow the medalists until the ceremony, which sometimes was arranged to happen the next day. During this period, CF members were to ensure that the athletes made their media appearances, ate, rested and followed drug testing procedure before they were handed back to their team or to their parents after the ceremony. Through this short time together, many members of the Ceremonial team developed lasting friendships with these international athletes.\(^{39}\)

In addition to the Vancouver area, the CF had at least three reserve battalions available to assist in the event that the battalion closest to Vancouver, stationed in Chilliwack, needed to be deployed.\(^{40}\) This partial headquarters with a company in Chilliwack were equipped with Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Explosive (CBRNE) defence capabilities. On a national level, the CF was also concerned about an attack on other major centres such as Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal. Battalions stationed closer to these city centres were prepared for these attacks on our nation’s major cities in the east in the event of a terrorist attack on Canada as a whole, as opposed to simply an attack on the Olympic Games. Assistance to the CF from the United States included the major U.S.-trained CBRNE team deployed to Washington State from

\(^{39}\) Crober. E-mail correspondence with author.  
\(^{40}\) Crober, interview.
Fort Lewis.\textsuperscript{41} In the instance that a major CBRNE event occurred, the CF would coordinate its efforts with United States personnel, who were trained and had developed a plan in order to combat a successful biological attack. Of particular interest were the drills run across the border between Canada and the United States, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security between Blaine and Vancouver.\textsuperscript{42} Crober mentions this CBRNE preparation as being particularly active in Chilliwack, where the reserve forces were stationed and available in the case of emergency in Vancouver.\textsuperscript{43}

There are many challenges in organizing a complex security venture such as the Olympic Games. One challenge is media relations specifically dealing with soldiers who disobeyed orders or cause an unnecessary ruckus which get leaked to the press. The CF found this issue apparent in two instances. One where two navy individuals were involved in a bar fight were sent back to Victoria, and another which developed over a nicotine addiction. A Petty Officer, after signing her portion of the contract with the cruise line Holland America, proceeded to smoke on her balcony. She was then sent to the headquarters at Jericho and forced to commute to the \textit{Discovery} base before Colonel Crober was informed of the mishap. He then proceeded to bring her up on military charges of disobeying a lawful order. Other RCMP or city police officials were sent home due to leaving shift early in order to watch a hockey game, or arriving at their post without bullets.\textsuperscript{44} CF Security planners were determined that there should be no reason for the media or anyone else to criticize members of the CF for not conducting themselves properly. Crober emphasized the importance of maintaining one’s image and not doing “anything that will give them [the media] material so that you end up on the front or second page

\textsuperscript{41} Crober, Interview.  
\textsuperscript{42} Johnson, “Olympic Security doesn’t stop at Canadian border.”  
\textsuperscript{43} Crober, Interview.  
\textsuperscript{44} Crober, interview.
Most issues of misbehaving personnel involved the RCMP and police from outside the Vancouver area. In total, fifteen RCMP officers were sent home early from the Games, while Crober only had to report three reported incidents by CF members.

In addition, there were apparent issues in communication between the RCMP and the CF in regards to how to handle difficult situations and the sensitivities of different organizations. For instance, both the military and the police forces have five levels of uniform that is expected to be donned, depending on the situation. Maj. General Fitch mentioned, for instance, that if the perceived threat required “force protection state four, some guys would take their flak jackets off, and some guys had already put them on ... Could we get an agreement to go to one method or the other? No.”

Along the same lines was the issue of confidentiality as it is recognized between departments at the National level. Both Crober and Fitch recognize confidentiality in their interviews as being potentially frustrating to the internal function of the organizations in the ISU for the Games. Fitch explained that there is no lexicon or standard for classification of information between federal departments. Something that may have one level of classification in one department may not have the same level of classification in another which can cause confusion. Fitch’s solution to this is an emphasis on trust relationships to be formed between organizations and departments. After working with individuals for a certain period of time, relationships are created so that regardless of which departmental jurisdiction an individual is under, they can make decisions independently in order to help create functionality within

45 Crober, interview.
46 Crober, interview.
interdepartmental pursuits. For example, RCMP practice in regards to handling a crashing plane is that the RCMP would alert emergency forces after the plane had hit the ground. Colonel Crober raised the point that if a plane is falling towards the earth that security forces should be heading towards the area in order to do crowd control and to secure the area of any potential explosion or fire hazards. In this case, an RCMP member and a CF member would have different responses to the situation. However, through a pre-forged relationship and some quick thinking, a solution can be agreed upon in order to make the best decision for the situation, whether it be agreeing to the RCMP’s standard practice, or the CF’s. Fitch mentions that there was a failed attempt to create an Olympic Secure Network in order to manage the different confidentiality rules between departments but this was abandoned after no one could agree on which standard to abide by.

While working with large national and third-party security management groups, the CF often found it beneficial while working closely with these groups to ‘embed’ individuals within their organizations in order to keep as up to date as possible on the details of Olympic security planning. Major General Fitch emphasized this new practice and described them fundamental to the aforementioned “trust relationships”. These embedded individuals built lasting relationships with the others they were working with, but not all of these initial ‘embedded persons’ were effective in the long run. Both Fitch and Crober mentioned having to pull individual ‘embeds’ from their assignment or situation due to personality clashes and the like. This is not to say that these particular individuals were not fit for the position; it was just a case of the wrong person in the wrong group with the wrong chemistry. Individuals were replaced by others who attempted to re-establish these trust relationships and bring a new personality that may have functioned

48 Crober, interview.
49 Fitch, interview.
better in that particular group setting than the previous individual. Crober emphasizes that in no way was it any one person’s fault for this movement of personnel just the nature of the task.50

In regards to the Paralympic Games, the security measures were scaled back substantially owing to there being significantly less people in the Greater Vancouver and Whistler areas. The CF was again asked to support the RCMP, with a lower ISU security standard. Maj. General Fitch through the Red Team suggested that since the security would be lowered, that perhaps it would be easier for individuals to make a much larger negative impact.51 Colonel Crober mentioned that the motives and the culture behind terrorist cells indicate that they wouldn’t take the lives of those with fewer limbs.52 Terrorist cells target countries, or events with a high expected payoff.53 Thus, the Paralympics did not appear to the ISU as being likely to attract the sorts of persons or institutions who would carry out an attack. The Paralympic security threat level, perceived as being almost negligible, was designated as being ‘low’. In contrast, the Olympic threat was perceived as low, but given a security level of ‘medium’. Reasoning behind this was that from either of these levels, ‘low’ or ‘medium’, security could be escalated quickly if this became necessary.54

The future of the Canadian Forces in these domestic security endeavours lies in the lessons learned from the Olympic Security Operation Podium. The ‘Red-Teaming’ strategy, embedding of officers into other departments and security organizations, and the streamlining of jargon and logistics within departments and security organizations are all results of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic security initiative. Maj. General Fitch is now in discussion with other

50 Crober, interview.
51 Fitch, interview.
52 Crober, interview.
54 Crober, interview.
groups, including the Federal government, on the benefits of the Red-Teaming strategy and is the individual with the foremost knowledge on the matter. Fitch has also encouraged the embedding of personnel within different departments and groups in order to maintain efficiency while task-planning.\textsuperscript{55} Colonel Crober, in his presentation to RUSI Vancouver Island on May 13, 2010, emphasizes the importance of creating a standard program in dealing with Interagency Security events,\textsuperscript{56} as well as stressing the importance of a lexicon usable by all levels of security in different departments.\textsuperscript{57} Crober calls for a “missions based MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), whereby OGD (Other Government Department) capabilities are pre-approved to support [the] Lead Security Partner in Future NSSEs (National Security Special Events).”\textsuperscript{58} Recalling his experience during the 1976 Olympics and again with Vancouver 2010, Crober mentions that the CF aren’t trained the same way as the RCMP while dealing with crowds or residents in the area.\textsuperscript{59} The local police and RCMP who do these crowd control tasks every day are better suited for this particular task,\textsuperscript{60} and in future inter-department security endeavours, the role of the CF in NSSE’s presumably will not change. Further discussion with Fitch finds an emphasis on autonomy and the sense of pride that each department takes in their own specific training. This again confirms that it is unlikely that the CF will take a more publically prominent role in future domestic affair unless called on by the federal government or, as seen at Vancouver 2010 in regards to medalists, at the request of VANOC.

\textsuperscript{55} Fitch, interview.
\textsuperscript{58} Crober. “OP PODIUM: Perspectives. Royal United Services Institute PRESENTATION, 13 May 2010” Slide 32.
\textsuperscript{59} Crober, Interview.
\textsuperscript{60} Crober, interview.
The legacy of Vancouver 2010 Olympic Security plan will live on in future Olympic events. The two Olympic Games that will follow the Vancouver Olympics are to be held in London in 2012 and Sochi, Russia, in 2014. Although discussions between VANOC and these other Olympic venues have taken place Crober and Fitch are dubious about whether Vancouver’s strategies will be effective in Sochi due to its geographical location and difference in political structure. London security officials, on the other hand, worked closely with Vancouver security officials during the event watching during the planning and execution of the Games security, and will be following Vancouver’s lead by installing a closed circuit television system on London’s streets.

Fitch sums the Olympic security up neatly. While at a lunch with a University of Victoria political science professor, talking shop, Fitch posed the question, why didn’t the ‘bad guys’ come?” The response was simply “you raised the bar too high.” Perhaps of all of the things that the CF contributed to Vancouver 2010 Security, this is the most important of all.

61 TorStar News Service. “Upcoming military burden may require soldier outsourcing.”
62 Crober, interview.
63 Crober, interview.
66 Fitch, Interview.