

**The Unavoidable Shadow of Past Wars:  
Obsequies for Casualties of the Afghanistan War in Australia and Canada**

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### **Introduction**

There is an essential sameness in the political purposes of giving members of the armed forces who have died in wars in the service of their community special obsequies. As Timothy W. Wolfe and Clifton D. Bryant remind us, the military funeral, “with its distinctive ceremonial characteristics and embellishments, serves to certify the deceased as a fallen warrior; it publicly legitimizes the ultimate sacrifice, provides public announcement and celebration of the individual’s death, and memorializes the social fact of the soldier’s demise.” Most importantly, military obsequies are supposed to ensure that “the memory of the fallen soldier is indelibly fixed in the collective consciousness of the society.”<sup>1</sup> By the same token, however, precisely how polities choose to memorialize their war dead will manifest important differences, and will, it can be argued, inevitably reflect the politics and political culture of that community.

There is perhaps no better illustration of this than how Australians and Canadians memorialized members of their armed forces who died in the war in Afghanistan. In 2001, in response to the attacks of 11 September, both the governments of Australia and Canada and a number of other countries joined the United States in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban government there. After a new government was installed in Kabul, both countries kept forces in Afghanistan under the United Nations-sanctioned mission to assist that government in establishing security and combating an on-going insurgency through the NATO-run International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Between 2002 and 2008, five members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and 83 members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have died in ISAF/OEF operations. How these 88 war dead have been treated has differed dramatically. While all 88 were accorded essentially similar *ceremonies* from their deaths in Afghanistan to their final resting places, there were essential differences in *how* they were memorialized, and who was involved in the obsequies.

In the case of the Australian war dead, the celebration and memorialization of those who died in Afghanistan were generally very *public* affairs that involved members of the government and opposition at the highest levels, participating in what became a *national* memorialization of the war

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy W. Wolfe and Clifton D. Bryant, “Full Military Honors?: Ceremonial Interment as Sacred Compact,” in Clifford D. Bryant, ed., *Handbook of Death and Dying* (Sage Publications, 2003), 170.

dead. By contrast, in Canada the involvement of federal government officials was limited to just one part of the funerary process, a ceremony, moreover, that was largely kept out of the public eye. Importantly, the funerals of those Canadians who died in Afghanistan were essentially *private* affairs, even in the case of those funerals that were “open” to the public; there was no funeral where both federal government and opposition politicians were present for the obsequies.

The purpose of this paper is to explain this marked difference. First, I examine the evolution of Australian and Canadian policies on treatment of war dead over the course of the twentieth century, showing that since the 1960s, Australian and Canadian practices in treating those members of the armed forces who died in service overseas became increasingly Americanized. In particular, the embrace by the Australian and Canadian governments of the American practice of repatriating the remains of the war dead forces the community to confront directly the remains of the fallen. I then examine how the five Australians and 83 Canadians who died in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2008 were treated, demonstrating the differences in practice between the two countries.

I conclude by suggesting that the way that the war dead are treated in these two countries is a reflection of how war and the armed forces are regarded in Australia and Canada. In particular, I argue that in both cases the shadow of past wars plays a crucial role in shaping how each community treated its war dead in the early 2000s. In Australia, the armed forces occupy a central place in the mythology of the nation, in part a function of the Gallipoli landing in 1915 and how that event was memorialized and entrenched in Australian political culture; in part a function of the 1942 Kokoda Track campaign against the Japanese; and in part a function of the way in which Australians who served in the Vietnam War were treated in the 1960s and 1970s. In Canada, war cast a completely different shadow: the deeply fraught divisions within Canadian society exposed by its expeditionary campaigns of the early part of the twentieth century had exceedingly long-term effects on politics in Canada that manifest themselves decades afterwards. These shadows, I suggest, make the military obsequies we can observe in each country seem quite “natural” to that country’s citizens while the practices in the other country seem unusual.

### **Memorializing the War Dead: From Non-Repatriation to Repatriation**

The fact that Australians and Canadians had to confront their Afghanistan war dead in a direct way in the early 2000s was a consequence of a profound shift in policy that occurred over the course of the twentieth century. Since the 1960s, there was an increasing convergence in how Australia, Canada and the United States treated the remains of members of their armed forces who died in wars fought overseas. Prior to the 1960s, the Australian and Canadian armed forces followed British practice and did not repatriate the remains of their war dead. While each country, like all members of the Empire and then the Commonwealth, sought as a matter of national policy to memorialize each one of the 101,275 Australians and the 116,000 Canadians killed during the First and Second World Wars individually, the vast majority of remains were buried close to where members of the armed forces had fallen. Obsequies, when they were possible, were conducted by the military chaplains who were attached to combat units,<sup>2</sup> with the participation of the fallen’s comrades. The “recoverable remains”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, “Faith on the Battlefield: Canada’s Catholic Chaplaincy Service during the Second World War,” *Historical Studies* 69 (2003), 64-84; Catholic Diocese of the Australian Defence Force, *History of Chaplaincy in the Australian Defence Force, 1901 to 1945*: [www.military.catholic.org.au/history/history1.htm](http://www.military.catholic.org.au/history/history1.htm).

<sup>3</sup> This is the term historically used by the US armed forces to refer to those human remains (defined by the Mortuary Affairs Center of the Quartermaster Corps, the unit tasked with mortuary responsibilities, as “a dead human body, or a part thereof”) that can be recovered for identification and repatriation—a grim reminder of

were then temporarily interred for health reasons, or a burial at sea was conducted. After hostilities were over, the remains were relocated to one of the 23,000 burial sites in over 140 countries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

This policy of non-repatriation of the war dead—which was common practice throughout the British Empire and, after 1926, the Commonwealth—was in stark contrast to American policy, which itself evolved over the course of the twentieth century. Even before the world wars, there was a strong tradition in the United States of repatriating the war dead, usually after the end of hostilities. After the Great War, proposals to repatriate the remains of those who had died on the Western Front created such a controversy in the US that the government decided to side-step the issue by giving the next of kin of those who died overseas a choice: if there were recoverable remains, the next of kin could elect to have the remains of the fallen repatriated to the United States for burial; they could have them moved to one of the twenty-four overseas cemeteries run by the American Battle Monuments Commission; or they could leave the remains where they had been buried during the war. This practice was also followed in the Second World War. Approximately 60 per cent of the next of kin of the 521,915 Americans killed in the two world wars elected to have the remains of their family members repatriated.<sup>4</sup>

When the Korean War broke out in 1950, American policy on repatriation changed. The US Army Quartermaster Corps, which was responsible for the identification and interment of fallen armed forces personnel, implemented a new policy of repatriating the remains of all members of the services who died in that conflict to the United States during the hostilities, a practice that continued through the Vietnam War and to the present.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually, Australian and Canadian practice was Americanized, but it took time to change. A total of 516 Canadians and 340 Australians lost their lives in the Korean War. After the war, the remains of Australian and Canadian war dead were relocated to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea (UNMCK) in Pusan, and the Yokohama War Cemetery in Japan, a site maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Likewise, the 54 Australians who died fighting with British forces in the Malayan Emergency in the 1950s and with Commonwealth forces in the Malayan/Indonesian “confrontation” in the 1960s are buried in Malaya and Singapore. It was not until Australia sent forces to Vietnam in 1962 that its policy of non-repatriation changed. Fighting alongside the United States, which by then repatriated its war dead as a matter of policy, prompted Australia to change its policy. On 19 January 1966, the government of Sir Robert Menzies decided that any Australian soldier killed in Vietnam would be repatriated if the family requested it and it was practical. By that time, twenty-five Australians had already been killed and had been buried in Malaysia and Singapore. But the other 496 Australians who lost their lives in that conflict either had their remains repatriated to, or are commemorated in, Australia.<sup>6</sup> In 1970, the Canadian

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the highly destructive effects of contemporary weapons systems on a human body. United States, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 4-06, 5 June 2006, GL-6: [www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp4\\_06.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp4_06.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Bradley Lynn Coleman, “Recovering the Korean War Dead: Graves Registration, Forensic Anthropology, and Wartime Memorialization,” *Journal of Military History* 72:1 (January 2008), 179-222.

<sup>6</sup> Australia, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Office of Australian War Graves: [www.dva.gov.au/oawg/](http://www.dva.gov.au/oawg/).

government also changed its policy, moving to repatriate the remains of those who died on peacekeeping and other service overseas. (British policy changed in 1968.<sup>7</sup>)

Coalition operations in the post-Cold War era created further convergence in obsequies and the treatment of the war dead. Thus, at present, those members of the armed forces of the 36 members of the international coalition in Afghanistan who die are treated in an essentially similar way. First, the decedent's flag-draped coffin is loaded into a long-range transport in a formal "ramp ceremony" involving service personnel from his or her unit and from units of other members of the coalition operating in the locality.<sup>8</sup> The remains are flown home, often to an air force base designated for receiving the fallen: Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Trenton in Canada, RAF Brize Norton in Britain, Dover Air Force Base in the United States. There, a formal repatriation ceremony is held, often in the presence of dignitaries, members of the decedent's family, and members of the military unit to which he or she belonged.<sup>9</sup> In some jurisdictions, an autopsy is performed before transfer to a mortuary. This is followed by a funeral, with or without full military honours, which can be private or public, usually at the determination of the next of kin, and then the consignment of the remains to their final resting place—burial or cremation.

Both Australians and Canadians who died in Afghanistan were accorded all these ceremonies. The ramp ceremonies in Afghanistan did not differ: these 88 members of the armed forces were farewelled from their bases in Afghanistan in a uniform manner, the way in which all members of ISAF/OEF who were killed in Afghanistan. It was when the remains arrived in Australia and Canada that the ceremonies were conducted differently. To these differences we now turn.

### **Australian Obsequies**

Of the five Australian soldiers killed in Afghanistan between 2002 and May 2008, one died in February 2002 as a result of the detonation of a landmine planted during the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s; the others were killed in late 2007 and early 2008, one from an improvised explosive device (IED) and three in combat. The repatriation ceremonies for the five Australians killed in Afghanistan were held at three Royal Australian Air Force bases close to where the individual's unit was headquartered: RAAF Base Pearce in Perth, Western Australia, RAAF Base Richmond in Sydney, and RAAF Base Amberley southwest of Brisbane. These ceremonies were attended primarily by members of the units to which the soldier had been attached and their commanding officers, together with members of the leadership of the Australian Defence Force. The Chief of the Army was present for every repatriation; the Chief of the Defence Force and the minister for defence were present for two.

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.veterans-uk.info/remembrance/repatriation.html](http://www.veterans-uk.info/remembrance/repatriation.html). As in the United States, next of kin are offered the choice of local burial or repatriation at public expense. The first major conflict in which this policy was implemented was the Falklands/Malvinas war of 1982. Virtually all of the recoverable remains of British fatalities were repatriated. Of the 255 British war dead, 174 were buried at sea, 64 were repatriated to the UK (and one to Hong Kong), and 16 were interred in the Falkland Islands. Duncan Anderson, *Falklands War 1982* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002), 88; Sir Lawrence Freedman, *Official History of the Falklands Campaign*, vol. 1: *The Origins of the Falklands War* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> For the ramp ceremony of Canadian Trooper Darryl Caswell, killed by an IED on 11 June 2007, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rS76hhnpHGQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rS76hhnpHGQ); for an Australian ramp ceremony, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsMuq-Ol5Rg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsMuq-Ol5Rg).

<sup>9</sup> For the repatriation ceremony of Australian Trooper David Pearce, killed by an IED on 7 October 2007, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIQJGLsvZYs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIQJGLsvZYs).

In only one of the five cases did the next of kin insist on keeping the funeral private. Kylie Russell, spouse of Sgt Andrew Russell, decided that the repatriation ceremony at RAAF Base Pearce with full military honours provided the opportunity for the Army and his regiment to honour him, and that the family wanted “to say goodbye away from the public eye.”<sup>10</sup> In the other four cases, however, the funerals were very public. The Governor-General, Michael Jeffrey, attended one funeral as Commander-in-Chief of the ADF; the Governor of Queensland, Quentin Bryce, attended another. The ADF leadership—Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, the Chief of the Defence Force and Lieut-Gen. Peter Leahy, the Chief of Army, together with the commanding officers of the unit—were there.

The federal political leadership attended all four funerals. Prime Minister John Howard was at the funerals of Trooper David Pearce in October 2007 and Sgt Matthew Locke in November; after the Liberal/National Coalition was defeated in the 24 November election, the new Australian Labor Party prime minister, Kevin Rudd, attended the funerals of Pte Luke Worsley in December 2007 and Lance-Corporal Jason Marks in May 2008. The minister for defence was also present at three funerals, and was represented by a junior defence minister at the fourth.

Moreover, these were bipartisan ceremonies, as Fig. 1 shows. When he was leader of the opposition, Rudd attended the funerals with Howard, including the funeral for Pearce, which occurred in the middle of the 2007 general election campaign. After Rudd became prime minister, he was joined by Brendan Nelson, who had taken over the leadership of the Liberal/National Coalition after the November election defeat, at the funerals of Worsley and Marks. Likewise, Joel Fitzgibbon, the ALP shadow minister for defence, attended the funerals before he became minister for defence after the November election.

**Fig. 1: Australian political leadership at military funeral**



At the military funeral of Trooper David Pearce in Brisbane, Prime Minister John Howard and leader of the opposition Kevin Rudd offering condolences to Pearce’s spouse Nicole. *The Age*, 18 October 2007.

<sup>10</sup> See Kylie Russell’s statement at [www.defence.gov.au/media/DepartmentalTpl.cfm?CurrentId=1283](http://www.defence.gov.au/media/DepartmentalTpl.cfm?CurrentId=1283).

It can be argued that the presence of this wide range of dignitaries at the funerals of the four soldiers who died in Afghanistan transformed these obsequies into a very *public* memorialization of these deaths. Moreover, the involvement of the representatives of the Crown, and bipartisan nature of the appearance of both the prime minister and leader of the opposition, and ministers and shadow ministers made these funerals essentially *national* events—commemorations intended to be shared with and by the entire nation.

### Canadian Obsequies

Between 2002 and 2008, 83 members of the Canadian Armed Forces died in Afghanistan. Eight of the fatalities occurred between 2002 and 2005, but only three were caused by hostile fire: two from an IED in October 2003, one from a suicide bomber in January 2004. “Friendly fire” killed four Canadians in April 2002, and one soldier died in a road accident in November 2005. The major turning point occurred in 2005, after the Liberal government of Paul Martin decided to contribute a battle-group to Kandahar province. Those troops took up position in early 2006, just as the Conservative government of Stephen Harper was taking office, and the number of Canadians killed in Afghanistan increased dramatically: 36 deaths in 2006, 30 in 2007, and nine between January and May 2008. The majority of the deaths between 2006 and 2009 were caused by hostile fire, many the result of IEDs.<sup>11</sup>

Some general patterns in the obsequies provided for those members of the CAF who died in Afghanistan can be observed. First, with but one exception, political elites played a highly limited role in the memorialization of Canada’s Afghanistan war dead: they were involved in the repatriation ceremonies held at CFB Trenton, but not the funerals or memorial services that followed. The exception involved the very first fatalities—four Canadian soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (3 PPCLI) killed by a 500-lb bomb dropped on a Canadian formation by an American F-16 fighter at Tarnak Farm near Kandahar City on 17 April 2002.<sup>12</sup> Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, the minister of national defence, Art Eggleton, and the military leadership were present at the repatriation ceremony at CFB Trenton on 20 April. All four soldiers were given full military funerals, which were attended by number of dignitaries. Nova Scotia premier John Hamm attended the funerals of Pte Nathan Smith in Dartmouth and Pte Richard Green in Hubbards, NS. The Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, who had cut short a visit to London to visit soldiers wounded in the Tarnak Farm incident at Ramstein, Germany, attended Cpl Ainsworth Dyer’s funeral in Toronto, which was also attended by Ontario premier Ernie Eves and the minister of foreign affairs, Bill Graham. On 28 April, Clarkson, Chrétien, Chief of the Defence Staff Ray Henault, and the colonel of the PPCLI, Gen. John de Chastelain, joined more than 16,000 people in a memorial service held at the Skyreach Centre in Edmonton, where 3 PPCLI was based.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Between 2002 and May 2008, the causes of death were as follows: IEDs (39), suicide bombers (11), other hostile fire (16), accidents (9), “friendly fire” (6), suicide (1), and one whose cause of death has still to be officially determined.

<sup>12</sup> The F-16 pilot had ignored an order to “hold fire,” for which he was eventually disciplined. See Michael Friscolanti, *Friendly Fire: The Untold Story of the US Bombing That Killed Four Canadian Soldiers in Afghanistan* (Mississauga: John Wiley & Sons, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> Lisa Gregoire, “Final respects for fallen heroes: Skyreach packed as garrison, country honour sacrifice,” *Edmonton Journal*, 29 April 2002, A1.

But the memorialization accorded to the four soldiers killed at Tarnak Farm turned out to be unique. No comparable public ceremonials were held for any of the other 79 Canadians killed in Afghanistan down to May 2008. The Governor General did not make a further appearance at a funeral. The Skyreach ceremony in Edmonton was the last time that a prime minister participated in any obsequies for returning Afghan war dead. Chrétien did not participate in the ceremonies of any of the other three Canadians who died in Afghanistan during his prime ministership; his successor, Paul Martin, did not attend the ceremonies for the lone Canadian soldier who died in Afghanistan between December 2003 and January 2006—Pte Braun Woodfield, who died in an accident in November 2005.<sup>14</sup>

Rather, after the tempo of casualties increased following the deployment of the battle group to the Kandahar region in February 2006, the practice of limiting the involvement of federal dignitaries to the repatriation ceremony alone evolved. Thus, when two soldiers died as a result of an accident in early March and one soldier was killed by friendly fire at the end of the March, the Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, who had been installed in September 2005, was present at the repatriation ceremonies at CFB Trenton along with Gordon O'Connor, the minister of national defence, Gen Rick Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff, and other general staff officers.

However, these three casualties had an impact on domestic politics in Canada: public opinion polls taken in early April showed that 46 per cent of Canadians were opposed to the Afghanistan mission.<sup>15</sup> Thus, when four soldiers were killed in a single IED blast later that month, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper decided to try to “manage” the potential domestic political impact of this sudden dramatic increase in casualties. On 24 April, the day before the remains of the four soldiers were to be repatriated, the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) ordered Gordon O'Connor, the minister of national defence, to adopt new guidelines banning the media from CFB Trenton.<sup>16</sup> Although the ban was justified on the grounds that the families needed privacy to grieve, it was widely interpreted as having been imposed so that Canadians would not be exposed to the sight of flag-covered coffins returning to Canada.

The move backfired badly. Ordinary soldiers at CFB Trenton purposely undermined the efforts of the PMO by moving equipment on the apron out of the way so that the media gathered along the fence of the base had an unobstructed, if long-range, view of the ceremony; likewise, the Ontario Provincial Police decided to help by taking the unusual step of closing Highway 2 outside the base in order to allow the media to gather safely along the fence.

More importantly, the soldiers’ families themselves were critical of the media ban. At the funeral of Matthew Dinning, his father Lincoln showed a video of the repatriation ceremony that had been taken by family members, introducing it with the words “Now I’d like to show you some of the video that Mr Harper wouldn’t let you see close up of Matthew’s arrival home.”<sup>17</sup> Another father, Tim

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<sup>14</sup> Glyn Berry, a Canadian diplomat serving in Afghanistan, was killed by a suicide bomber on 15 January 2006. He was given a funeral with full military honours in London, England, on 26 January. Paul Martin did not attend this funeral; the government was represented by Pierre Pettigrew, the minister of foreign affairs.

<sup>15</sup> *Angus Reid Global Monitor*, 17 April 2006: [www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11588](http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11588).

<sup>16</sup> It is not known what O'Connor thought of the order he received from the PMO; however, an Access to Information request subsequently revealed that many officials in the Department of National Defence itself did not agree with the ban: “Military officials opposed repatriation media ban,” CTV.ca, 2 July 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Lauren Larose, “Family buries fallen son amid criticism of PM,” *Brantford Expositor*, 1 May 2006, A8.



Goddard, claimed at the funeral of his daughter, Capt Nichola Goddard, that he could see “no reason” for the ban, noting that he “would like to think that Nich died to protect our freedoms, not restrict them.”<sup>18</sup>

The negative reaction of the families prompted a torrent of criticism, including thousands of emails protesting the ban,<sup>19</sup> criticism not only from the opposition parties but also from some backbench Conservatives. Much of the criticism focused on how Harper was merely copying President George W. Bush’s efforts to control media coverage of fatalities returning from the war in Iraq.<sup>20</sup> In the face of this criticism, Harper backed down, amending the guidelines to allow the families of the dead to decide whether the media were to be allowed on the base for the repatriation ceremony.

After the summer of 2006, the obsequies for Canadians killed in Afghanistan assumed a routine. All the coffins were met by the minister of national defence—Gordon O’Connor, and then Peter MacKay after the cabinet shuffle of 14 August 2007—and Rick Hillier, Chief of the Defence Staff, together with other senior commanders. On occasion, the Commander-in-Chief, Governor General Michaëlle Jean, attended the repatriation ceremony: she was there to meet sixteen of the 67 fallen soldiers who were returned to Canada between July 2006 and May 2008.

Most of the funerals themselves were provided with military honours, and most were closed to the media. Of the 79 funerals held after the four “friendly fire” casualties in 2002, only 10 were attended by dignitaries. The lieutenant governor of British Columbia attended two funerals, and the lieutenant governors of Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and Québec each attended one; provincial premiers attended four funerals; members of provincial legislatures and members of local town councils were also present at a number of the ceremonies. Federal officials, by contrast, were notable by their absence. Neither Prime Minister Harper nor the minister of national defence participated in any of the funerals held for the 75 Canadians killed between March 2006 and May 2008. Two Québec cabinet ministers attended funerals of soldiers in their constituencies.

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<sup>18</sup> “‘Truth, duty, valour’ described fallen Canadian soldier,” CBCNews.ca, 26 May 2006; Kerry Williamson, “Fallen soldier’s dad lashes out at Harper; grieving father chastises PM for ban on media coverage,” *Calgary Herald*, 27 May 2006, A1.

<sup>19</sup> James Gordon, “Harper scolded over military bans: Canadians swamped PM with criticism, documents show,” *Calgary Herald*, 19 June 2006, A1; Peter Pigot, *Canada in Afghanistan: The War So Far* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007), 113.

<sup>20</sup> Bush was widely criticized for trying to hide the mounting US casualties in Iraq by banning any coverage of repatriation ceremonies. In March 2003, prior to the invasion of Iraq, the Pentagon banned all news coverage and photography of repatriation ceremonies on American bases. See “Curtains ordered for media coverage of returning coffins,” *Washington Post*, 21 October 2003. In fact, the ban had been first imposed during the administration of George H.W. Bush at the time of the first Gulf War in 1991. Under the so-called “Dover Ban” of 1991, the United States Department of Defense banned media from photographing the coffins of American war dead being repatriated, although the ban was not widely enforced. In April 2004, a civilian contractor working for a firm handling the shipment of soldiers’ remains to the United States was fired after she took photographs of coffins of American soldiers which were published in the *Seattle Times*. See Brian Gran, “‘The Dover Ban’: Wartime Control over Images of Public and Private Deaths,” paper presented to “*Unblinking: New Perspectives on Visual Privacy in the 21st Century*,” University of California Berkeley, 3-4 November 2006; available at [www.law.berkeley.edu/institutes/bclt/events/unblinking/unblinking/Gran.pdf](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/institutes/bclt/events/unblinking/unblinking/Gran.pdf).

There were also a number of memorial services, usually held by the regiment at the base where the soldiers were from. Remembrance Day services were often an occasion for the commemoration of those killed—both formal and informal.<sup>21</sup> In addition, an informal community memorialization evolved around the escorted convoys that took the remains the 172 kilometres from CFB Trenton to the coroner's office in Toronto for autopsy: local police forces, fire services, ambulance services, veterans organizations and ordinary folk took to lining Highway 401 and the overpasses.<sup>22</sup> In response, the Ontario government designated that portion of Highway 401 as the Highway of Heroes to honour the fallen troops.<sup>23</sup>

It should be noted that there was no bipartisanship at all in the commemoration of the war dead. While all the opposition leaders—Stéphane Dion, the Liberal leader of the opposition, Gilles Duceppe, leader of the Bloc Québécois, and Jack Layton, leader of the New Democratic Party—routinely issued statements of condolence on behalf of their parties whenever a member of the CAF died in Afghanistan, they were never involved in the funerary rites commemorating the war dead. No member of the opposition was ever involved in the repatriation ceremony—under any of the three prime ministers between 2002 and 2008. As far as can be determined, no opposition leader or national defence critic attended any of the funerals of those killed in Afghanistan.<sup>24</sup>

In short, the contrast with Australia could not be more marked. In Canada, obsequies for those killed in Afghanistan were not designed to provide the political community *as a whole* to participate in the memorialization of those who died in the service of their country. With the singular exception of the four “friendly fire” deaths in 2002, the commemoration of Canada's war dead in Afghanistan was structured to emphasize the *private*, the *regimental* or, on some occasions, the *local*.

### Explaining the Difference

How to explain the differences between the way in which Australians and Canadians commemorate those who died on service in Afghanistan? A logical place to start might be to focus on the most obvious difference between Australia and Canada: the much larger number of war dead in the Canadian case—83 Canadians versus five Australians. Could it be that the difference in the number of casualties had an impact on how the war dead were memorialized—in other words, because there

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<sup>21</sup> In 2006, Lieutenant-Colonel Dave Anderson, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (1 PPCLI), decided to deploy soldiers from his unit to Remembrance Day services across Canada in towns and cities where the those who had died in Afghanistan were buried. For an account of some of the public—and private—commemorations of the dead conducted by the 77 officers and non-commissioned officers who participated in what Anderson called “collective and individual acts of remembrance,” see Christie Blatchford, *Fifteen Days: Stories of Bravery, Friendship, Life and Death from Inside the New Canadian Army* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2007), 334-48.

<sup>22</sup> For a slide show of the convoy for the six Canadians killed by an IED on 8 April 2007, see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbCg1uf6XB8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbCg1uf6XB8).

<sup>23</sup> [www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1689](http://www.premier.gov.on.ca/news/Product.asp?ProductID=1689).

<sup>24</sup> This lack of bipartisanship is even evident in such ceremonies as the return of the unknown soldier in May 2000, when members of the opposition were conspicuous by their absence: [www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=Memorials/tomb/ottawadirect4](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/remembers/sub.cfm?source=Memorials/tomb/ottawadirect4). By contrast, when the unknown soldier was returned to Australia in November 1993, both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition were pall-bearers. Tony Wright, “Home at last, a soldier with no name,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1993, 1.

were fewer Australian casualties, the more attention they were given in commemoration? The problem with this explanation is that the Canadian pattern was established well before casualties started mounting in 2006. Moreover, that pattern did not change even as the number of fatalities increased.

Could the difference lie in how the war was seen in both countries? It might be surmised that one of the reasons why the Canadian prime minister could not be seen at a funeral was because the mission is not popular and his presence would be interpreted as an attempt to politicize the issue and increase support for the mission. The problem with this explanation is that the public opinion numbers in both Australia and Canada are virtually identical: in both countries, opinion about the mission is essentially divided, and has not changed markedly in response to the number of Australians or Canadians killed in Afghanistan. In a Decima poll in April 2006, 45 per cent of Canadians polled approved the mission and 46 per cent were opposed. In February 2007, an Angus Reid poll showed that 46 per cent wanted Canadian troops brought home; by April 2007, after nine further fatalities, that number jumped to 52 per cent. As of May 2008, 54 per cent of Canadians opposed an extension of the mission.<sup>25</sup> These figures mirror Australian attitudes almost exactly. An AC Nielsen poll in March 2006 found 45 per cent were in favour of the Australian mission, with 48 per cent opposed. A Lowy Institute poll in April 2007 found 46 per cent favoured the mission and 46 per cent were opposed. A University of Sydney poll released in October 2007 showed little change, with 50 per cent in favour and 46 per cent opposed.<sup>26</sup>

Nor can the differences be attributed to a particular prime minister, or a particular government, or a particular party. The practices in each country outlined above were unchanging over time, and persisted despite changes of leadership and political party in both countries. In Australia, prime ministers from both political parties attended funerals; they were accompanied by leaders of the opposition from both parties. In Canada, three different prime ministers from two parties did not attend a single funeral, and leaders of opposition parties were nowhere to be found in Canadian commemorations.

A more fruitful explanation, I argue, is to be found in how Australians and Canadians react to the practices outlined above. Australians appear to find it quite *natural* that their political elite—the Commander-in-Chief, the prime minister and leader of the opposition, and ministers and shadow ministers, and the Australian Defence Force brass—would gather for a public commemoration of the war dead, even in the middle of a bitterly-fought general election campaign. By contrast, Canadians appear to be quite comfortable with the absence of their political elites at funerals and the absence of any bipartisan commemoration of the sort that is routine in Australia; indeed, one could reasonably hypothesize that Canadians simply would not take kindly to efforts to turn funerals into something more *public* and *national*. And thus I suggest that the reason for the “givenness” of such divergent practices in the two countries lies in how war is historically seen in Australia and Canada, and what impact wars of the past have on contemporary political culture.

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<sup>25</sup> April 2006 poll: [www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11588/canadians\\_divided\\_over\\_Afghanistan\\_mission](http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11588/canadians_divided_over_Afghanistan_mission); February and April 2007 polls: [www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2007.04.25\\_Afghanistan\\_Press\\_Release.pdf](http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/2007.04.25_Afghanistan_Press_Release.pdf); May 2008 poll: [www.angus-reid.com/uppdf/2008.05.12\\_Afghanistan.pdf](http://www.angus-reid.com/uppdf/2008.05.12_Afghanistan.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> March 2006 poll: [www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11050](http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/11050); Lowy Institute, *Australia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Sydney, 2007), fig. 7; Murray Goot, *Australian Attitudes towards the United States* (Sydney: University of Sydney United States Studies Centre, 3 October 2007), 26: [sydney.edu.au/us-studies/docs/Survey\\_Presentation-3\\_Oct\\_07-Part\\_1.pdf](http://sydney.edu.au/us-studies/docs/Survey_Presentation-3_Oct_07-Part_1.pdf).

In Australia, the commemoration and celebration of the armed forces and the war dead is deeply embedded in national culture. This comes from the long-term effects of three wars and how those Australians who fought (and died) in those wars are commemorated: the First World War, the Second World War, and the Vietnam War.

We must begin with the importance in Australia attached to the role of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) in the First World War—particularly the ill-fated landing on the Gallipoli peninsula on 25 April 1915 and the campaign that followed. Gallipoli cost 8700 Australian and 2700 New Zealand lives, but that “glorious defeat” is a deeply-entrenched “collective remembrance”<sup>27</sup>—an event that almost since the campaign itself has been widely regarded by Australians as crucial in the creation and shaping of their nation.<sup>28</sup> The dawn ceremony that marks the commemoration of ANZAC Day on 25 April is a *national* experience. Even though it is a national holiday, huge numbers turn out each year well before dawn for what is an intensely *military* ceremony that celebrates the role of the armed forces in the creation of the nation. And because families routinely take their children to these ceremonies, and have done so since the ceremony was institutionalized in 1927, the annual ANZAC ceremonies socially reproduce this celebration of the armed forces.

One measure of the degree to which the Gallipoli campaign is entrenched in Australia culture is the large numbers of Australians who take what is in essence a pilgrimage to Anzac Cove (which under the terms of the 1923 Lausanne peace treaty with Turkey is a single war cemetery under the management of the Office of Australian War Graves): in 2002, 10,000 people attended the dawn ceremony on 25 April; by 2005, that number had grown to 17,000. A large tourist industry has grown to accommodate the demand, with considerable environmental stress on the site itself.<sup>29</sup>

The role of Australian forces in one campaign of the Second World War is likewise celebrated and memorialized in Australian political culture: the Kokoda Track<sup>30</sup> campaign in Papua New Guinea. In

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<sup>27</sup> As Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan remind us, “Collective remembrance is public recollection. It is the act of gathering bits and pieces of the past, and joining them together in public... Collective memory is constructed through the action of groups and individuals in the light of day.” Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, “Setting the Framework,” in Winter and Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6. See also George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> As an iconic event in Australian political culture, the “ANZAC Legend” is constantly being socially reproduced. For example, Peter Weir’s 1981 film, *Gallipoli*, continues to be shown nightly in Eceabat hotels. Every generation or so new histories of Gallipoli make their appearance. For recent examples, see C.E.W. Bean, *Bean’s Gallipoli: The Diaries of Australia’s Official War Correspondent*, ed. Kevin Fewster (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2007); Peter Stanley, *Quinn’s Post, Anzac, Gallipoli* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005); Les Carlyon, *Gallipoli* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2001/New York: Doubleday, 2002). For an exploration of the social construction of Gallipoli in Australia, see the contributions in Jenny Macleod, ed., *Gallipoli: Making History* (New York: Frank Cass, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> When the Turkish government widened the roads to the site to accommodate the increasing numbers of tourists, there was significant damage done to parts of the local environment: see Australia, Senate, Finance and Public Administration Committee, *Matters Relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula*, 12 October 2005, available at [202.14.81.230/Senate/committee/fapa\\_ctte/completed\\_inquiries/2004-07/gallipoli/index.htm](http://202.14.81.230/Senate/committee/fapa_ctte/completed_inquiries/2004-07/gallipoli/index.htm).

<sup>30</sup> Although it was known as both a track (an Australianism for a path or trail) and a trail before the Second World War, American wartime reporting entrenched the use of “trail.” Kokoda Trail was the official name adopted by the Battles Nomenclature Committee of the United Kingdom in 1957, the government of Papua New Guinea Place Names Commission in 1972, and the Australian War Memorial. Despite this, “track” remains the common nomenclature: access to the trail is regulated by the Kokoda Track Authority, and many

1942, Australian forces held off a Japanese overland advance towards Port Moresby in a series of battles fought along a 96 km single-file track crossing a mountain range. Because this was the first time that Australian security had been directly threatened, and because the Australians were fighting for the first time on their own, this campaign is widely celebrated in Australia as the first time that Australian forces acted alone to defend the nation.<sup>31</sup>

Walking the Kokoda Track is increasingly being embraced as a pilgrimage comparable to Gallipoli: in 2001 just 76 individuals paid the fees of 200 Kina (USD\$75) charged by the Kokoda Track Authority to walk the track; in 2007, 5117 permits were issued. In April 2006, when he was leader of the opposition, Kevin Rudd walked the track with his son and Joe Hockey, a Liberal member of Parliament. In January 2007, Rudd announced that the Track should rank with Gallipoli in the country's military history, and announced that an ALP government would work with the PNG government to have the Track placed on UNESCO's world heritage register.<sup>32</sup>

Australian participation in the Vietnam War from 1962 until December 1972 also plays an important role in the contemporary celebration of the military—but in a roundabout and paradoxical way. The Australian contribution to that war—which started with 30 advisers in 1962 and climbed to more than 7000 combat troops after 1965—grew to be intensely unpopular in Australia, particularly since conscription was introduced in 1964 in order to sustain Australian troop numbers and since 202 of the 521 Australian fatalities were conscripts. The unpopularity of the war manifested itself in a wave of antipathy towards the approximately 47,000 veterans who served in Vietnam. Many veterans from the Second World War spurned Vietnam veterans, and some RSL (Returned Services League of Australia—Returned and Services League as of 1990) branches made it clear that Vietnam-era veterans were not welcome. Certainly the national RSL refused to cooperate with the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia in the VVAA's struggle for recognition and support. More importantly, on numerous occasions it was made clear that Vietnam veterans were not welcome to join in ANZAC Day ceremonies. The Australian Labor Party was critical of the war—and of those who had fought in it. In Canberra, there was a period when soldiers were barred from wearing their uniforms—in order to prevent incidents.<sup>33</sup>

However, this ill-treatment had a paradoxical long-term effect: following the lead of American Vietnam veterans who organized “Welcome Home” parades long after the war, the VVAA organized a “Welcome Home” march in Sydney on 3 October 1987 that involved more than 25,000 veterans. Hundreds of thousands of Sydneysiders turned out to “welcome” the veterans home—fifteen years after the last combat troops were withdrawn. This single event appears to have been a watershed, for it was after this that a Vietnam memorial was constructed on Anzac Parade in Canberra, dedicated in

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Australians, including John Howard and Kevin Rudd, and even the Department of Veterans' Affairs, routinely refer to it as the Kokoda Track.

<sup>31</sup> For a history of the campaign, see Paul Ham, *Kokoda* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2005).

<sup>32</sup> “Rudd vow on Kokoda Track,” *Herald-Sun*, 21 January 2007.

<sup>33</sup> For discussions of the treatment of Vietnam veterans, see Paul Ham, *Vietnam: The Australian War* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2007); Joy Damousi, *Living with the Aftermath: Trauma, Nostalgia and Grief in Post-war Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chap. 7; Janine Hiddlestone, “Voices from the Battlefield: Personal Narratives as an Historical Tool in Studying the Place of the Vietnam War in Australian Society,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 25 (March 2002), 57-66; Gary McKay, *Going Back: Australian Veterans Return to Vietnam* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2007), xv-xvii.

1992, and rededicated in 2002. Moreover, the Coalition government of John Howard used the 40th anniversary of the battle of Long Tan in 1966 as the opportunity for the expression of a collective apology to the Vietnam veterans. Speaking to the House of Representatives, he said:

The sad fact is that those who served in Vietnam were not welcomed back as they should have been.... The nation collectively failed those men. They are owed our apologies and our regrets for that failure. The very least that we can do on this 40th anniversary is to acknowledge that fact... and to acknowledge the magnificent contribution that they have continued to make to our nation.<sup>34</sup>

The efforts to reconstruct the Vietnam experience so that it conformed more closely to the historical tradition demonstrates the continuing long-term impact of the two world wars on political culture in Australia. It also suggests that one of the reasons why the war dead from Afghanistan receive truly *national* commemoration, despite the tepid support for the mission, is the remembrance of how the nation treated the Vietnam veterans.

In Canada, by contrast, war casts a completely different kind of shadow. The fundamental divisions between English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians over the wars of the early twentieth century—particularly the South African war of 1899-1902 and the Great War of 1914-1918—manifested themselves most unambiguously over the introduction of conscription in 1917. But the “Conscription Crisis” of that year had exceedingly long-lived consequences. The decision of the Liberal leader Sir Wilfrid Laurier to refuse to join a coalition government under the Conservative prime minister Sir Robert Borden in 1917 over conscription in a stroke destroyed the Conservative Party in Québec. Beginning in 1921, Laurier’s successors reaped a long and enduring harvest: with but two short six-year interludes, the Conservative Party was cast into the electoral wilderness for the remainder of the twentieth century. Since the key to electoral success was widely seen to be the ability to maintain the support of French-speaking Québécois, it was not at all surprising that during the interwar period the Liberal Party tended not to celebrate the armed forces as an institution that helped forged the *nation*, as was the case in Australia. Thus for all the commemoration of the war dead across Canada,<sup>35</sup> the Canadian government never put in place a ceremonial celebration comparable to ANZAC Day; nor is there any comparable celebration of the contributions of the armed forces to the Canadian *nation*.

It can be argued that these historical habits had long-term consequences, affecting Canadian attitudes and practices towards the armed forces long after the conscription crises of the world wars had passed into history. Canadians were, it was increasingly said, an “unmilitary people,”<sup>36</sup> and the country was a “peaceable kingdom.”<sup>37</sup> In particular, it can be argued that the growth of the idea over

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<sup>34</sup> Australia, Parliament, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 17 August 2006, 41.

<sup>35</sup> See Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

<sup>36</sup> George F.G. Stanley, *Canada’s Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1960).

<sup>37</sup> For explorations on how Edward Hicks’s “peaceable kingdom” portraiture was applied in a Canadian context, see the contributions to Victor Howard, ed., *Creating the Peaceable Kingdom and Other Essays on Canada* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1998).

the Cold War period that the primary mission of Canada's armed forces was peacekeeping<sup>38</sup> was accompanied by the progressive depreciation of the war-fighting abilities of the Canadian armed forces—reflected most clearly in the name of the forces themselves, which allowed politicians and other elites to neatly strip the “Armed” from the name.<sup>39</sup>

In the first decade of the post-Cold War period, depreciation often turned into denigration. The Liberals under Jean Chrétien came to office with a dim view of the Canadian Armed Forces. Chrétien's first act was to cancel a military procurement agreed to by the previous Conservative government—the purchase of EH-101 helicopters—for purely political purposes. Because of the size of spending on the military, and because it is the largest single discretionary item in the federal budget, it was not a surprise that the Chrétien government used DND's budget as a means of bringing order to federal finances. But it was clear from his words and actions that Chrétien had little sympathy for National Defence, openly questioning for example the arguments being made for re-equipping the armed forces.<sup>40</sup>

The impact of what J.L. Granatstein has called “the disasters of the 1990s”<sup>41</sup> and what Gen. Rick Hillier, when he was Chief of the Defence Staff, took to calling the “decade of darkness”<sup>42</sup> was intensified by the “Somalia Affair” and its aftermath.<sup>43</sup> In March 1993, during a United Nations mission in Somalia, members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment tortured and killed Shidane Arone, a Somali teenager who had broken into the Canadian camp at Belet Huen. While the soldiers who killed Arone were arrested, the killings evolved into a major scandal over the course of 1993 as it became clearer that there were serious problems within the Canadian Airborne Regiment that senior officials in the Department of National Defence had sought to ignore, paper over, or cover up. In opposition, the Liberals had called for a public inquiry and eventually the Liberal government appointed a commission of inquiry in March 1995 and later that year disbanded the Canadian Airborne Regiment. However, the Somalia Commission of Inquiry engaged in such a detailed

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<sup>38</sup> For example: Eric Wagner, “The Peaceable Kingdom? The National Myth of Canadian Peacekeeping and the Cold War,” *Canadian Military Journal* 7:4 (Winter 2006-2007); Sean M. Maloney, *Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means, 1945-1970* (St Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, 2002); Norman Hillmer, “Peacekeeping: Canadian Invention, Canadian Myth,” in J.L. Granatstein and Sune Akernan, eds., *Welfare States in Trouble: Historical Perspectives on Canada and Sweden* (Toronto: Swedish-Canadian Academic Foundation, 1994), 159-170; J.L. Granatstein, “Canada and Peacekeeping: Image and Reality,” in Granatstein, ed., *Canadian Foreign Policy: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993).

<sup>39</sup> On 1 February 1968, the Liberal government of Lester B. Pearson eliminated the three separate services, and changed the name of the forces, albeit in a highly ambiguous way: according to section 14 of the National Defence Act, 1985, “The Canadian Forces are the armed forces of Her Majesty raised by Canada and consist of one Service called the Canadian Armed Forces.”

<sup>40</sup> Douglas L. Bland, ed., *Canada Without Armed Forces? Claxton Papers 4* (Kingston: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2003); J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed the Canadian Military?* (Toronto: Harper Flamingo, 2004).

<sup>41</sup> J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army: Waging War and Keeping the Peace*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), xii.

<sup>42</sup> Mike Blanchfield, “Top general calls Liberal rule ‘decade of darkness,’” 17 February 2007.

<sup>43</sup> David Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada's Army, the Airborne, and the Murder in Somalia* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996).

investigation of the Department of National Defence that the Chrétien government decided to shut it down before the 1997 elections.

The Commission did not go quietly: its final report was a damning indictment of the Canadian military and particularly its leadership. Much of the scathing anger evident in the final report came from what the commissioners called the “wall of silence” that confronted them: “the testimony of witnesses was characterized by inconsistency, improbability, implausibility, evasiveness, selective recollection, half- truths, and plain lies.” The report pulled few punches:

Evasion and deception, which in our view were apparent with many of the senior officers who testified before us, reveal much about the poor state of leadership in our armed forces and the careerist mentality that prevails at the Department of National Defence. These senior people come from an elite group in which our soldiers and Canadians generally are asked to place their trust and confidence.<sup>44</sup>

Such is not the stuff of which national celebration of an institution can readily be made, and it can be argued that the highly negative and widely-publicized views of the Somalia commission report played a powerful role in legitimizing and entrenching the negative attitudes towards the military being displayed by governing elites in the 1990s. There is little doubt that public trust in the military was deeply affected by the scandal, the large number of resignations of senior officials notwithstanding. One measure of the poor regard of the public was that members of the armed forces were embarrassed to wear their uniforms. As Hillier admitted in 2007, after Somalia “we were disowned by our population.”<sup>45</sup>

While the Canadian Armed Forces were seen somewhat differently after the attacks of 11 September 2001, and particularly since Hillier’s appointment as the Chief of the Defence Staff in February 2005,<sup>46</sup> a few reminders of that earlier period remain. For example, it is telling that during the 2005-2006 election campaign, numerous people working for the Liberal Party of Canada dreamed up, approved, and then made a television advertisement that sought to play to Canada’s putative “unmilitary” nature, implying that a Conservative proposal to redeploy CAF units to different cities for handling natural disasters was in fact a nefarious plot to stage a coup.<sup>47</sup> The attitudes reflected in that ad reflected how the Canadian Armed Forces continue to be seen by some political elites in Canada.

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<sup>44</sup> Somalia Commission of Inquiry, Executive Summary: [www.dnd.ca/somalia/somaliae.htm](http://www.dnd.ca/somalia/somaliae.htm).

<sup>45</sup> “Canada’s top soldier not sorry for speaking out,” CBC News, 7 November 2007.

<sup>46</sup> “Hillier’s appointment would fundamental change the philosophy, the strategy, the organization, and the culture of the Canadian Forces. He would become the most important and influential CDS in living memory.” Janice Gross Stein and Eugene Lang, *The Unexpected War: Canada in Kandahar* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2007), 151.

<sup>47</sup> To the beat of a war-drum, a voice-over says: “Stephen Harper actually announced he wants to increase military presence in our cities... Canadian cities... Soldiers with guns... In our cities... In Canada... We did not make this up... Choose your Canada.” All the 30-second Liberal attack ads are archived on-line at [www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20060103/ELXN\\_liberal\\_attackads\\_060110/20060110/](http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20060103/ELXN_liberal_attackads_060110/20060110/). The ad was posted to the Liberal party website, where it was discovered by a reporter, downloaded and widely played. The English-language ad was immediately pulled, but a French-language version ran in Québec.



## Conclusion

I have argued that for Australians, the repatriation of those who have fallen in the service of the nation provides an opportunity for the *nation* as a whole to mourn; the obsequies are very public, and the bipartisan attendance of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition at the funerals underscores the essential unity of the state's commemoration of the fallen. For Canadians, the memorialization of the war dead is much more private. The Canadian state—personified in the form of the Governor General, the minister of national defence, and the CAF brass—meets the remains of the fallen as they are returned to Canada in a semi-public ceremony, but then passes the body to the family for obsequies that are essentially private, even if they involve full military honours. Neither the prime minister nor the leader of the opposition are involved in any of the commemorations; indeed, if the prime minister or an opposition leader showed up to funerals, they would surely be accused of inappropriately politicizing the event.

I have argued that the differences between the way that the armed forces in Australia and Canada are viewed and celebrated can be explained in large measure by looking at the impact of earlier wars on the political culture of both countries. In Australia, the armed forces are widely commemorated as an institution crucial to the emergence of the nation as an independent community within the British Commonwealth and crucial to the defence of the country in the Second World War. The depth of the ANZAC legend helps us understand the paradox that it was the very ill-treatment of the Vietnam-era veterans which resulted in a strengthening of the national commemoration of the armed forces. In Canada, by contrast, war has historically been divisive, exposing the contradictions in a political community that has never been able to create a singular *nationalism*. The attitudes of Canadians towards the armed forces has been supportive, but Canadians do not celebrate the contribution of the armed forces to the *nation* as Australians do.