

## April Meeting

Topic: *“Dropping Bombs and Firing Rockets: Robust UN Peacekeeping in the Congo, 1960's and today”*

Speaker: Dr. Walter Dorn, Professor,  
Canadian Forces College

Reporter: Bob Winson

CAHS Toronto Chapter President, George Topple introduced Dr. Walter Dorn, who is a Professor of Defence Studies at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) and the Canadian Forces College (CFC). Dr. Dorn serves as the Chair of the CFC's Department of Security and International Affairs. Previously, he served as co-chair of the CFC's Department of Security Studies and as Deputy Director for Outreach and Community Development. He is also Chair of **Canadian Pugwash**, an organization of physical, life and social scientists seeking to reduce the threats to global security. He is a graduate of Scarborough College (University of Toronto) in Physics and Chemistry. Dr. Dorn received his Doctorate in Chemistry at the University of Toronto in 1995. While Dr. Dorn is a scientist by training his doctoral research was aimed at chemical sensing for arms control. His research on the technology of detecting chemicals can also be applied to many different areas of peacekeeping and arms control, including biological arms control. His passion for the combining of lab research to the technical aspects of peace-keeping began at Scarborough College in 1982. He had the opportunity to attend the United Nations (UN) in New York with one of his professors for the Special Session on Disarmament. He became fascinated with the United Nations and started to attend about every two months. By chance he became aware that the organization named “Science for Peace”, a Canadian NGO, had applied for membership in the UN, but that the process seemed stalled. On his next visit to New York he inquired about it. The application had been misplaced, but because of his inquiry, it was put on track again. Returning to Toronto, he became somewhat of a “hero” and was appointed the group's official representative to the UN. He achieved much and by 1988 at the Second Special Session on Disarmament, he addressed the UN General Assembly.

Dr. Dorn spent 5 years observing the UN before he felt competent enough to write about it. One of his first articles was for Peace Magazine. He also wrote a book titled, **“Peacekeeping Satellites: The Case for International Surveillance and Verification”**. This led to him reviewing a proposal for establishing a UN reconnaissance capability. As a scientist, he took a special interest in the verification of biological and chemical weapons disarmament treaties. He began to work at Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), an organization based near the UN that enables parliamentarians of many different countries to work together. As the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was nearing the final stages of negotiation, the PGA wanted to promote the process and inform the parliamentarians about their responsibilities under the treaty. Dr. Dorn subsequently assisted with the negotiation, ratification and implementation of the CWC. He addressed parliamentary bodies on several continents and drafted a parliamentary declaration that was signed by more than one thousand parliamentarians. In Canada, he testified before the Foreign Affairs Committee, which produced an acceptable law. About 190 countries have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention; some 188 nations have ratified it. He recently finished writing a book titled **“Keeping Watch: Monitoring, Technology, and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping Operations”**. At the Canadian Forces College, Toronto he teaches officers of rank, from Major to Brigadier from Canada and over 20 other countries in the areas of



Speaker: Dr. Walter Dorn

*Photo Credit - Neil McGavock*

arms control, Canadian foreign / defence policy, peace operations and international security. His interests are broad, covering both international and human security, especially the operations in the field to help secure them through peacekeeping and peace enforcement by the United Nations. More than just believing in the UN, Dr. Dorn is devoted to making it work.

Chapter President Topple introduced Dr. Dorn, who started by welcoming Chapter members and also his colleague, Professor Chris Madsen and his daughter, Sara, who were in attendance. Dr. Dorn stated that his talk was devoted to the aerial aspects of the UN operation in the Congo. He then posed the question of, “Why would an operation primarily for peacekeeping have to drop bombs”. The answer was that in part it was necessary to take a more robust approach in the Congo. Dr. Dorn told the Chapter members that as they came into the lobby of the college they would have seen on the right a portrait of Lieutenant-General E.L. M. “Tommy Burns”. The portrait shows a dour, unsmiling and austere military officer, but it was reported that “Tommy Burns” also had a well disguised sense of fun. On the left side of the lobby is a plaque devoted to the 120 Canadian service personnel that lost their lives while on peacekeeping operations. The inscription on the plaque reads “Presented to Canadian Forces College by CSC 25 in memory of those members of the Canadian Forces who sacrificed their lives in the service of peace”, dated 26 June 1999. Dr. Dorn said that, “I am always proud when I come into the college in the morning to feel the connection between this college and the peacekeeping initiative”. “The plaque was presented with the notion that we do remember them and we certainly do”. Canadian Lieutenant-General E.L.M. “Tommy Burns” was appointed the first commander of the first peacekeeping force, the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) sent to Suez/Sinai. British, French and Israeli troops had invaded the Suez Canal area of Egypt in 1956 following the threat of the Egyptian government to seize and nationalize the canal. A plan was proposed to the United Nations by Canadian External Affairs Minister, Lester B. Pearson, to form a United Nations peacekeeping force to separate the opposing forces, maintain the cease fire between Israel and Egypt and hopefully eventually to find a political settlement to the “Suez Crisis”. Pearson's plan was conceived as a means of easing the British and French out of the area and by preventing a major war from breaking out between Israel and Egypt. The UN formally established UNEF on 24 November 1956. Under the direction of Ralph Bunche, the UN undersecretary for special political affairs a 6000 strong UN neutral force from 10 countries was created. Lester B. Pearson received the 1957 Nobel Peace Prize for his innovative thinking and long commitment to peace.



Portrait of Lt Gen E.L.M. “Tommy Burns” at the Canadian Forces College  
*Photo Credit - R. Winson*

Canada also had a major responsibility in providing an Air Element to support UNEF I and give it “Air Mobility”. All Canadian aircraft employed had their RCAF markings removed, the entire aircraft painted white and the blue and white insignia of the UN applied. The Gaza-based element was the 115 Air Transport Unit (ATU) which at full strength operated 3 CC-129 (Dakota) and 4 CC-123 (Otter) aircraft. The ATU operated from the El Arish airport which was 7 miles from the main UNEF Headquarters in Rafah, Gaza located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The mission commanders quickly decided that aerial reconnaissance from the Otter aircraft was to be a major priority. Observations were done at an altitude of 1000 thousand feet above the ground for the best surveillance. The international contingent of military



Canadian Otter of 115 ATU at El Arish Airport  
*Photo Credit - Canadian Air & Space Museum*

The main heavy transport Squadron put into action was 435 based at Namao / Edmonton. Within 2 days of being ordered to the Mediterranean the first CC-119G “Flying Boxcar” was in service with the UN. Capodichino airport near Naples, Italy was where 435 Squadron was based and later joined by 436 Squadron. All types of cargo and personnel from many nations were airlifted into Egypt to help start an historic world police force. The mission task was to airlift troops, mail and equipment the 1300 miles from Naples to Abu Suweir airport in Egypt near the Suez Canal. The trip was long and the crews found problems with the desert sand and the available navigational facilities. Precision flying was required to stay within the very narrow Egyptian air corridors. In 1957 the RCAF transport squadrons moved from Abu Suweir to the refurbished El Arish airport. This airlift mission lasted until the “Six Day War” of 1967.

observers carried aboard were looking for any preparations for war, any troop movements and in addition trying to keep the Armistice Demarcation Lines secure. High desert temperatures of up to 100 F (38C) and higher made for bumpy air which made the mission very uncomfortable for the observers. Sometimes scorching winds would whip up sandstorms reducing visibility drastically for the pilots and severely degrading the safety of the flight environment. The patrols ranged from the Mediterranean down the Sinai Peninsula to Sharm el Sheik at the southern tip of the peninsula where it meets the Gulf of Aqaba. Another task was the air re-supply of the UNEF outposts manned by troops from Finland, Sweden and Yugoslavia. Members of the Royal Canadian Army Signal Corps (RCASC) attached to the unit operated the ground to air signal equipment at El Arish and Sharm el Sheik.



Location Map of UNEF I Operation Area  
*Map Credit - www.mapsofworld.com*

Before Dominion Day was called “Canada Day” the Air Element staged a Dominion Day Celebration flyover of all of their aircraft with General Burns in attendance on July 1, 1958. Shortly after it was proposed to General Nasser of the United Arab Republic (Egypt) that one of the units making up the Canadian contingent would be the “Queen's Own Rifles”. Nasser objected strongly and said that he wanted to get the “Queen out of Egypt” and that “his troops might mistake the Union Jack in the Canadian Red Ensign for that of Britain and fire on the Canadians”. Dr. Dorn mentioned that this event might have been one of the factors that led Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to promote a new flag for Canada, which resulted in our “Maple Leaf” flag. Peacekeeping has a long tradition in Canada even before the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lester B. Pearson in 1957. In 1988 all of the peacekeepers that served to that time were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, although without the money that went with the prize! There were 80,000 Canadians that had served up to that time out of the 800,000 personnel that the UN had provided, so Canada had contributed a full ten percent of the peacekeeping forces during the “Cold War” period. In 1992 the national Peacekeeping Monument was created next to the National Gallery in Ottawa with a woman communicator, a soldier standing on guard and



Canadian Peacekeeping Monument Ottawa  
 Photo Credit - [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

an observer looking through binoculars which typified the peacekeeping missions that had been created to that day. The title of the monument is “Reconciliation”, spelled the same in English and French. In 1994 the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre was established by the Government of Canada, now at Carleton University. It is a very valuable national peacekeeping training institution. The Centre which largely does pre-deployment training, has been told that only one more year of government funding is available and that after it will have to rely on self funding. Dr. Dorn stated that in 1995 the peacekeepers were honoured “by making it to the back of the Loonie Canadian Dollar”. Later in 2000 the *Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal* was

established for those that had served a minimum of 30 days cumulative service in a UN or international peacekeeping mission. The medal recognizes all Canadians, including former and current members of the Canadian Forces, members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, other police services, and Canadian civilians who contributed to peace on certain missions. Peacekeepers are also honoured on the back of the \$10 bill with a woman peacekeeper looking through binoculars in the centre, two doves on the left and a veteran and family on the right. Our most famous Generals are Lew Mackenzie in Sarejavo, and Romeo Dallaire, Commander of UN forces in Rawanda. Dr. Dorn stated that, “They did admirable jobs in very tense times for the resources they were given”. He further stated, “I would add that another famous General of late deserves recognition, he being Lieutenant-General Charles Bouchard, who was the Commander of the UN-backed, *Operation Unified Protector*, NATO's recent military intervention in Libya”.

Dr. Dorn continued with his talk about the Congo which was the location of the next big mission after UNEF. “It is quite important to look back in many ways to appreciate what was done since it was a forerunner of what we do today”. The story begins with the formal separation from Belgium on June 30, 1960 and the declaration of the new, Republic of the Congo. The new Prime Minister was Patrice Lumumba and the President was Joseph Kasavubu. The Congo is a huge country, the size of Western Europe and it was part of the large decolonization process when five countries received their independence in the 1960's. In the Congolese Army there were only Belgium officers and serious problems of lack of promotion, discipline and pay. Following independence, the head of the Congolese Forces said that, “there would be no changes or promotions”. This statement caused a rebellion that spread like wildfire through the country. During the first week of July the army mutinied against the Belgium officers and attacks took place against Europeans as well. In response to the violence the Belgium government sent in troops to protect the Belgium citizens in the Congo.



The Congo 1960  
 Map Credit - Dr. Walter Dorn

Taking advantage of the crisis, a province called Katanga declared secession from the Congo on July 11, 1960. The leader there, Moïse Tshombe, wanted to work with the Belgium mining firm, *Union Minière*, to be able to benefit from the rich copper, uranium, gold and other mineral wealth and keep it for himself. However, the wealth in Katanga was necessary to maintain the economic viability of the country. Prime

Minister Patrice Lumumba made an urgent appeal to the UN for help. United States President Eisenhower at the time thought it unwise to intervene. Dag Hammarskjold, the UN Secretary-General did respond and on July 17, 1960 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 143. The resolution called for Belgium to remove its troops from the Congo, especially in Katanga, and for the UN to provide military assistance to the Congolese forces to meet their tasks. Dag Hammarskjold had worked with Lester Pearson in the Suez Crisis and now he was proposing a much larger force in the Congo to keep the superpowers out, boost the central government and to put the Katangan secession down. The UN did create a large peacekeeping force of 20,000 which was the largest and most complex UN operation in the Cold War. The force was called “Opération des Nations unies au Congo” (ONUC). A summary of the ONUC's aims were: *Help restore Law and Order; Secure withdrawal of Belgium forces and Prevent secession.* The mission would become increasingly robust over time beginning with air power, transport, medical and later combat. The UN forces had to assume the task of security and move the Belgium troops out. The major task was to prevent the secessionist province of Katanga from breaking away. The mission became more robust involving direct combat later on. I have to pay compliment to Lieutenant-General Bill Carr, who was at the time was a Group Captain and he was called from his vacation in July, 1960 to run the new huge UN Air Transport System, based in Leopoldville. He had 78 aircraft, 13 different types and you can imagine the maintenance problems and 11 different nationalities that had never worked together before. The RCAF used North Stars on the Pisa-Leopoldville run initially, but then switched to the larger Yukon aircraft. Lieutenant-General Carr had the task of transporting 20,000 troops into the mission area and to provide the lifeline of goods, troops and rotations to keep that mission alive. To fly cargo and troops to the Congo required 70 hours of flying time due to refueling stops and the lack of navigational aids that prevented direct flights. Canada was the backbone of the transport system, although the United States helped tremendously by flying in 9000 troops in two weeks time using C-124 aircraft. The small team of RCAF personnel managed with aplomb, although many shortcuts must have been taken. One time the RCAF team noticed that a Russian plane had landed at Leopoldville loaded with arms. The force commander then asked the team to find a way to prevent that Russian plane from taking off. The Canadians then proceeded to let the air out of the tires of the plane and of course they had the only air pump! They told the Russians that they couldn't find their pump. So this delay allowed diplomacy to kick in and keep those weapons out of the Congo.

As soon as the first UN troops had arrived in the Congo, Patrice Lumumba wanted them to take back Katanga by force. The UN refused his request. Following a previous Resolution, Resolution 146, dated 9 August 1960, was passed and it mentioned Katanga and contained written provisions that allowed UN troops to enter Katanga, but not to intervene in any internal conflict. Lumumba then launched an attack on Katanga, but the attack failed. Patrice Lumumba was then dismissed by President Kasavubu and replaced by the Chief of the Congo Army, Joseph Mobutu. Lumumba later went to Elizabethville, where he was tortured and executed.

The UN Security Council met after Lumumba's death and on 21 February 1961 adopted Resolution 161 which, authorized all appropriate measures “to prevent the occurrence of civil war in the Congo, including the use of cease-fires, halting of military operations, and the use of, if necessary, in the last resort”. In August of 1961 5,000 United Nations troops launched an attack called Operation “Rum Punch” on Katanga. The operation had limited success by capturing key points in the province, but Moise Tshombe avoided capture and fled to Rhodesia. This operation was followed by “Operation Morthor” which was planned to round up foreign mercenaries and political advisers. The operation was a military and political failure. It did not help that a single Fouga Magister jet trainer flown by a Belgium mercenary for Katanga was able to bring havoc to the operation. This aircraft attacked UN convoys, bombed an Irish Brigade holding a strategic bridge, destroyed many aircraft on the ground at Elizabethville airport and also strafed UN officials holding a press conference. Chaos further resulted when UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold flew to Rhodesia



Captured Fouga Magister at Elizabethville Airport  
Photo Credit - [www.acig.org](http://www.acig.org)

to meet Tshombe. Sadly, Hammarskjold's plane crashed and he was killed along with 15 others. He was replaced by U Thant who agreed to another attack on Katanga in December 1961. The UN Commanders now knew that they had to create a "ONUC Air Force" to give them offensive air power. Ethiopia contributed F-86 Sabre Jets, Sweden provided Saab J29 Fighters, and the Indian Air Force sent Canberra Bombers. All of the aircraft assembled now gave ONUC a formidable "air force". At the UN Security Council, Resolution 169 was passed on 24 November 1961 giving UN commanders the authorization to expel mercenaries from Katanga. The next event that triggered UN action was the shooting down of a UN observation helicopter by Katangan forces. UN commanders then ordered an offensive to take place called "Operation Grand Slam". In the early morning of 28 December 1962, Swedish J29 aircraft attacked Kolwezi airfield with 20mm cannon fire. The ONUC air offensive continued for 4-7 days with 76 sorties striking aircraft, fuel dumps and other targets.



Swedish Saab J29 Jets Photo via Dr. Walter Dorn

In January of 1963, Moise Tshombe agreed to end his secession of Katanga, give up military means and meet the UN demand and ultimatum. No UN personnel were killed in OP Grand Slam. However, in the period of 1960-1964, 215 ONUC personnel were killed in service. A delay in the ONUC offensive would have been costly as 15 Mustang aircraft were found hidden in Angola. A Belgium mercenary that was interrogated said that, "If you had only given us four more weeks so that we could have got the Mustangs ready, you would have experienced the same disastrous surprise". The ONUC victory came in the nick of time. The Congo Mission had been controversial, exhausting and almost sent the UN into bankruptcy. No further UN missions were carried out in Africa until Namibia in 1989.

### Summary of the Conclusions of the Congo Mission:

#### It dispelled the myth of peacekeeping as non-combat

- \* ONUC Air Force: Air combat patrols, air-to-air combat, close air support, strikes against airfields, reconnaissance. It showed the utility of air intelligence and air combat.
- \* Established and enforced *de facto* no-fly zone
- \* US backing of eight fighter planes, but no pilots – declined by U Thant
- \* Importance of precedents & being aware of them!
- \* Defence / Offence -Secured freedom of movement / Responded to attacks

Chapter President George Topple thanked Dr. Dorn for an outstanding presentation and enlightenment of a topic that is not too well understood by Canadians. On behalf of the Chapter Executive and members, Bob Winson, presented Dr. Dorn with a gift of appreciation.

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