

# **Building the Blue Team: Using Conflict Management Concepts with Canadian Forces Personnel Overseas**

**Tim Gushue, Major (RCAF-Retired)**



*Photo courtesy of DND-MDN Canada*

**“Running a war seems to consist of making plans and then ensuring that all those destined to carry them out don't quarrel with each other instead of the enemy.”**

- Field Marshal Alan Francis Brooke, 1st Viscount Alanbrooke. KG, GCB, OM, GCMG, DSO and Bar, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1941 to 1946

**“We could handle being shot at by the enemy...that was to be expected. What we don't accept is how we were being treated within our own unit and so much in-fighting.”**

- Canadian soldier, Afghanistan Post-mission Decompression Interview, 2007

## **Introduction**

This article will discuss how familiar private and public employment sector conflict management concepts, practices and training were applied and adapted by the Department of National Defence's Conflict Management Program to prepare military units and individuals for the exigencies of overseas operations. In particular, it details the experience and level of success of implementing interest-based conflict management tools into teams deploying for overseas missions.

## Meet the Blue Team and the Red Team

In war games, exercises and military operations, the contesting sides are often designated as the “Blue Team”, the friendly forces – our own and our Allies, and as the “Red Team”, the opposing forces or enemy.

The Blue Team does not derive its strength solely through the weight of numbers or through superior weapons and technology. The Team’s morale, cohesion and confidence in itself, each other member, and its leaders, are all key human dimensions factors which contribute to a decisive, and cost-effective, war-winning pre-condition: unquestioned mutual reliance or trust. Emerging clues suggested that conflict management tools which supported the development and strengthening of trust within individuals and units comprising the Blue Team, would increase their level of mission success and reduce the human cost.

The Red Team, or the enemy, comprises all the forces that can frustrate the efforts of the Blue Team. The Red Team can prosper from many sources, not just from the strength, ability and number of hostile troops that it brings to the battlefield. Internal friction within the Blue Team, unmanaged conflicts or in-fighting which reduce the strength and ability to subdue or resist the enemy and to achieve its own goals, benefits the opposition. Without the Red Team doing anything, the Blue Team can lose strength through alienation, internal resistance or inertia, self- or directed-removal from the mission or simple disinterest and complacency of its members towards the achievement of the Team’s goals. In addition to its conventional war-fighting gains, the Red Team gains strength as “friendly fire” incidents, accidents, sickness, and all other non-battle casualties weaken the Blue Team. Unchecked, those effects can ultimately defeat or critically weaken the Blue Team. The ghostly echo of Sun Tzu’s dictum looms: “The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu, 544 B.C. to 496 B.C. The Art of War.

## The Red Team Operating Among Us

The observations of Field Marshal Alan Brooke during WWII and the unnamed Canadian soldier in 2007 above, highlight the unfortunate irony that much of the effort that should be directed toward defeating the enemy is dissipated through internal conflicts or friction within one's own camp. This is not a new phenomenon. Internal dissent and conflict as a reducer of effectiveness, cohesion and trust have posed a threat and have characterised and compromised military operations since time immemorial. Now our troops were experiencing, and remarking bitterly, on it.

My observations begin in 2003. During *Operation Enduring Freedom* (the Global War on Terrorism, active operations that commenced in October 2001), I served at United States Central Command, McDill Air Force Base, Florida as the head of personnel (J1) for the Canadian military contribution to operations in South-West Asia. My team's purpose was to ensure that sufficient combat-ready Canadian forces were available to meet our commitments within Coalition operations.

Before long, we observed that, in addition to combat causes, a number of our personnel that had been unable to integrate or function effectively within their units or to adapt to the demands of the mission were being returned from overseas. Their compromised performance was considered a hazard to the mission, to their comrades and to themselves, so they had to be removed. Though necessary, it imposed an increased burden on their comrades, as trained and ready replacements were not always available. And even when they were, it took time to integrate them into the Blue Team already well into their mission. On a personal level, being removed from the mission was often devastating for the individual concerned. Though not acknowledged as such, these were victories for the Red Team. Moreover, they hadn't fired a shot to achieve those non-battle casualties and the diminution of our effective fighting strength. Few questions were asked and even fewer clues were offered as to what was going wrong. It was still early in the campaign and there may even have been a little bit of optimistic "home by Christmas" wishful thinking at play that did not compel serious investigation.

In 2004, now back in Canada, I completed mediator training and became the Coordinator of the Dispute Resolution Centre at 8 Wing Trenton, Ontario. Soon we

were seeing returning personnel wanting to deal with unresolved conflicts that had occurred while deployed overseas, many of whom had been sent home early from their missions. This was the up-close and very human face of the “long-distance statistics” that I had worked with while at Central Command less than a year ago. In many instances, we were dealing with the down-stream effects of unresolved conflict in a high pressure environment. It was clear that these effects were highly corrosive and had undermined the cohesion and effectiveness of the Blue Team. In isolated cases, the effects had been utterly debilitating to individuals. Fortunately, through a combination of facilitated discussions or mediations involving the parties that had been in conflict, as well as utilising other services, including conflict coaching, most individuals were able to achieve positive resolutions and deal with those past issues and regain their drive, commitment and focus. In a few cases, however, where things had progressed too far and were suspected of having become nascent mental health issues, referrals were made to our colleagues in that discipline. That road ran both ways. Regularly, medical personnel who were familiar with our conflict management work, referred patients to us when initial patient discussions suggested that a non-medical intervention at the Dispute Resolution Centre might yield viable results.

We learned that when interpersonal conflicts occurred overseas, attempts to “sort it out” were sometimes made by well-meaning but untrained individuals, with varying degrees of success. More often, however, individuals were directed to simply get on with their jobs, hunker down and “suck it up” for the duration of the mission, usually six months or less. Much of this was driven by the pressure to get on with the job, a limited replacement pool and no established or dedicated conflict management resources overseas. In the majority of instances, individuals in conflict situations were retained overseas, albeit with a reduced ability to contribute to the mission. If one believes in icebergs, the visible portion that came through our doors alluded to the 90 percent that was hidden underneath the surface. If this were true, we had a significant, and profoundly disturbing, human dimensions issue to address. Was this a generally unknown- and unmeasured - success for the Red Team that we were observing? If the source of this harm was of our own doing and not through any

effort or action by the enemy, was it true that “We have met the enemy and the enemy is us.”?<sup>2</sup>

Tremendous and highly creditable pre-deployment efforts are made to prepare our personnel for overseas missions. Units are brought together for collective training for varying periods of time. Physical fitness is emphasised as well as skills in weapons handling and tactics to be employed. All of the technical, command and control skills that will be required are thoroughly practiced. Pressure to perform and coalesce is applied and at the end of the training, units and individuals are deemed to be as ready as they can be made for their missions. Units and individuals are well trained and prepared to deal with the traditional Red Team, the *enemy without*. From our perspective, we wanted to add a new element. We intended to unmask and identify then contribute to the fight against the Red Team echelon operating as the *enemy within*, by building the bulwark of an internal conflict management capacity within individuals and the Blue Team as a whole.



*Photo courtesy of DND-MDN Canada*

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<sup>2</sup> Pogo in “The Pogo Papers”, Walt Kelly, 1952.

Based on our observations, we felt that our personnel were being thrust into a high-risk, human dimensions, minefield but were not equipped with the awareness or skills to avoid or defuse even minor conflicts and irritants which, if left unattended, quickly escalated to dangerous and damaging levels. Personnel returning from overseas told us that major disputes were undermining the cohesion and effectiveness of entire sections and units. Many of the personnel issues that I had witnessed while at Central Command that plagued individuals and units were attributable to internal causes and may have been preventable. It was clear that the Red Team was gaining ground and we wanted to help defeat them. As conflict management practitioners, what weapons did we have in our arsenal that would support the battle and bolster the Blue Team's ability to operate and prosper in the unforgiving environment of deployed operations?

In addition to the traditional intervention services (mediation, conflict coaching and group processes), Dispute Resolution Centres provided a very robust training program in workplace conflict management. This was exceptionally well supported at 8 Wing Trenton where sessions were conducted at least once and often twice each month. Sessions consisted of five days worth of very intense conflict management training (three days of "Resolving Conflict Effectively" and two days of "Conflict Management for Leaders", packaged and compressed into four days.) The curriculum included understanding conflict, the formation of perception and opinion, escalation, communication skills, interest based approaches, facilitation, conflict management styles, leading collaborative conversations, etc. - lots of theory and a strong role-playing component. To those already in the field, this may be a familiar conflict management training protocol. We intended to put this skill set into the Blue Team's pre-deployment training and in a sufficient proportion (i.e. critical mass), to effect what we anticipated to be a positive and observable shift in the character and behaviour of the group.

## **The Blue Team Fights Back**

**"Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity."**

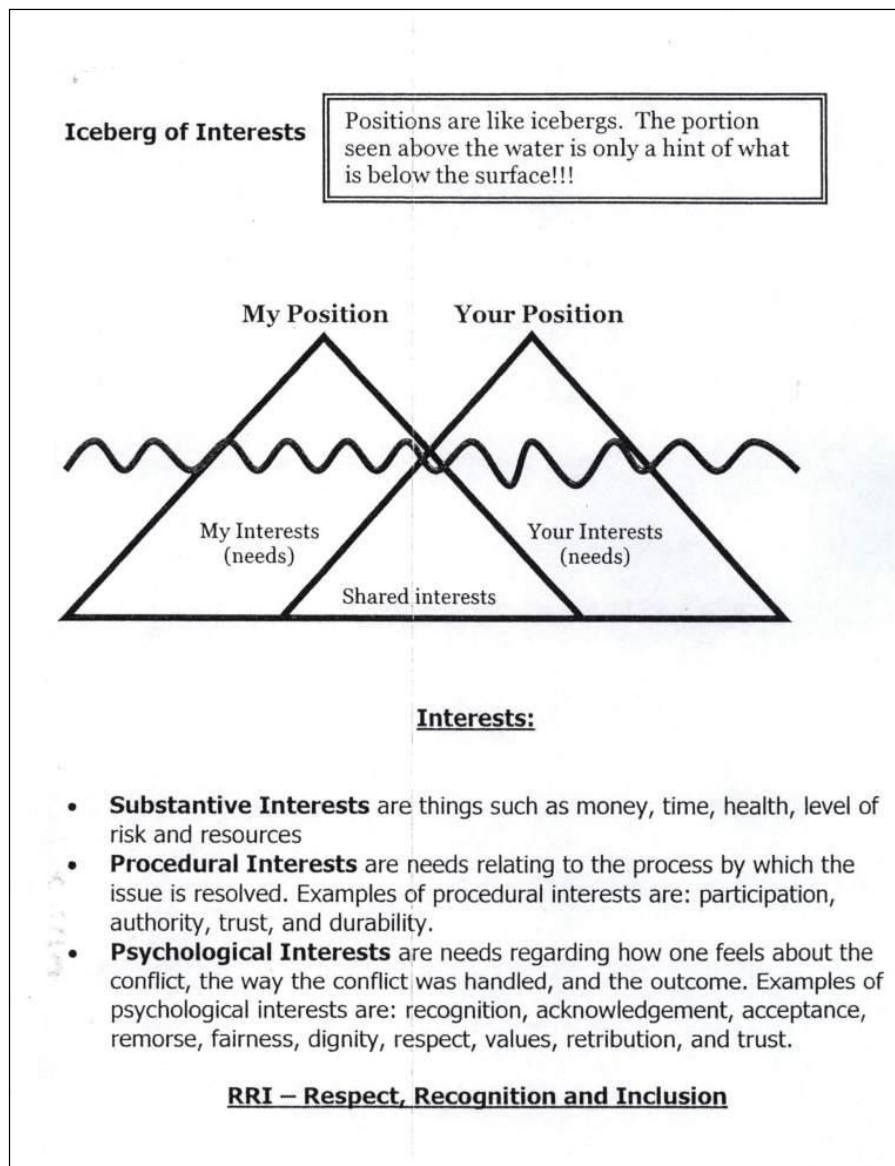
- Lucius Annaeus Seneca, Roman philosopher. 5 B.C. to 65 A.D

Opportunity found us prepared when we learned that 8 Wing Trenton would be providing a mission-specific *ad hoc* group of approximately 85 personnel to support air and logistics operations into Afghanistan from a forward location in the Middle East known as Camp Mirage, from June to December 2007. This group was designated "8 Mission Support Squadron" or "8 MSS." From our experiences at the DRC, it was a certainty that we would be called on at the end of the mission to assist in the resolution of unresolved conflicts that had taken place overseas and to assist in the remediation of some pretty roughed-up psyches. Perceiving that our very own Blue Team would not be fully prepared for the austere and demanding environment into which they were heading, we were determined to do something. Since we were not able to send a Conflict Management Practitioner overseas with the Contingent (I had asked), perhaps we could generate a "Conflict Management Capacity" *within* the members of the unit? My behavioural scientist colleagues advised me that in order to make appreciable change and effect in attitude and behaviour of groups, a minimum critical mass of 25 per cent of the group needed to achieve significant competence in the new skill or trait. We had the training tool ready. We mobilised to halt the advance of the Red Team and, if possible, help regain lost territory. Would the Blue Team finally catch a break and get lucky? But first we had to sell an untested and unproven concept to the deploying unit.

Though our training was well accepted and was achieving solid results in static locations - offices, hangars and warehouses, etc. - throughout the Canadian Forces, it had not been considered as a pre-deployment training component. For the 8 MSS Commander, who had not deployed previously, it would be very much "take the leap and the net will appear." Following a very determined sales pitch, liberally sprinkled with faith-based and experiential promises of what we hoped to achieve, the 8 MSS Commander, agreed to take our conflict management training, along with 15 other key members of the MSS leadership team - a full course load. At the end of the four-days training, though tired, this group saw the potential contribution that this training could have for the success of their mission. The Mission Commander had become an enthusiastic believer and requested another serial for 16 more of her team. We attained a critical mass of 38 per cent trained. Significantly, it was concentrated in the upper and middle management echelon where its influence would percolate to all levels.

We knew that in the addition to the skills that we hoped would be firmly lodged in our trainees' sub- or near-consciousness, military personnel like to have an *aide memoire* that they can keep handy in a pocket or at their work station for quick reference. (See figure 1, one side of a four page pocket-size card fold-up that the trainees took overseas.) Also, drill-like, was the mantra of the "Big Three Interests", Respect, Recognition and Inclusion – the measure and obligation of how to treat others and the expectation of how they were to be treated, major underpinnings of trust and mutual reliance, part of what holds groups and individuals together.

**Figure 1**



With this stroke, we were now embarking on a human dimensions experiment that had no parallel in military history. For the first time, a formed unit was deploying for overseas operations with an embedded conflict management capacity theoretically sufficient to address most conflict-related issues that they encountered. As 8 MSS boarded their aircraft to head out on their mission, we knew that only time would tell if we were on the right track or if our efforts, and the faith of that unit, were in vain. It was an anxious six months cut off from our protégés other than the regular reports from the Trenton-based support rear-party on how they were doing, occasional messages or a question to us on what to do in such-and-such circumstance. Our Blue Team was very much out there on its own, due to distance and time differences, at an isolated airfield in the middle of a desert. In many respects, it had to rely on its own initiative, preparation and resources and be essentially self-sufficient and self-reliant. They were a very, very long way from home.

The tension of eager anticipation and curiosity culminated shortly after the return of the unit. When the personnel of 8 MSS returned, readjusted to family and routine duties, our trainees were convened to complete a Post Operations Report with a Conflict Management Annex and follow-on interviews to measure what, if any effect, the conflict management training had had on their behaviour and the units' overall performance. The responses were overwhelmingly positive and within the context of a very successful mission. A few extracts from their Report:

“We dealt with issues immediately before they got out of control”

“People at all levels knew the procedures and were open to sorting things out using ADR”

“Built cohesion before we headed over.”

“..useful in managing personnel in a different environment where emotions are quite different than when you are surrounded by family and friends.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 8 MSS POR 6 May 08. Paragraphs 5, 6 and 7.

There were dozens of other useful and encouraging testimonials that would help us to improve our product and to push for incorporation as deployment preparation.

In response to our information that, unlike past experiences, “zero” mission-related issues had been brought to the DRC in the four months following the return of the MSS, their consensus was: “Well, what did you expect? We were able to sort things out ourselves.” Forgive me, but we did indulge in a “hallelujah moment.”

In summarising the overall effect on the group, the Report concluded:

This is a tool that will aid in sustaining forces in place over the long term. This group reported that it helped them maintain mission focus and effectively managed conflicts so that it would not interfere in the execution of tasks. The training offered them new concepts and tools that they incorporated into their work performance and leadership styles. This becomes more compelling with the ongoing commitment to further missions Overseas....(T)hose with ADR skills saw themselves as distinct from other units in-theatre, viewing themselves in this regard as the “haves” and those without as the “have nots” ....it gave them a decided advantage when dealing with other units.<sup>4</sup>

To ensure the validity of these findings, similar training sessions were carried out at 4 Wing Cold Lake for their MSS soon to be deployed, achieving a critical mass of 36 percent trained. Their Post Operations Report findings reinforced and validated those of 8 MSS. A few brief verbatim extracts:

“Having leadership trained and able to recognise problems before eruption was enough to quell the problems that would otherwise have come to issue.”

“Often, I would not hear about problems until they were a non-issue...they were recognised when they should have been and dealt with rather than left to fester.”<sup>5</sup>

We knew that we were on the right track. So did others. Thereafter, all MSS groups deploying from the RCAF were trained to 100 per cent. It was a Grand Slam for the Blue Team. Our teams were succeeding at being highly cohesive, mission-focused

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<sup>4</sup> 8 MSS POR 6 May 08. Paragraphs 17 and 19.

<sup>5</sup> 4 MSS POR 19 May 09. Paragraphs 16 and 18.

and effective units and, better yet, the Red Team was being shut out. They were proud and self-reliant. Had we found a “silver bullet” that we could fire into the heart of the Red Team to halt their advance within our own lines? Emboldened, we were ready to take the greatest leap of them all.



*Photo courtesy of DND-MDN Canada*

### **“You’re in the Army now”**

Our area of responsibility had increased and CFB Petawawa and its DRC now came within Central Region’s purview. Like all bases, and most visibly, the Army bases, Petawawa had gone onto a definite war-footing geared towards ground combat operations in Afghanistan. We became aware through the CFB Petawawa DRC and mental health colleagues there and at Defence Headquarters in Ottawa, that Army units were also experiencing internal conflict-related challenges similar to those of our RCAF personnel (see quote at the beginning of this article) that were producing individual and mission-damaging effects.

Acknowledging that there were aspects of the Army mission which entailed higher risks of immediate injury or death, it would take something special to advance our efforts with the Army. Our experience and findings with RCAF units and personnel had opened the doors to new possibilities. We knew, though, that we would have much work to do before we attempted to promote our work in that environment.



*Photo courtesy of DND-MDN Canada*

Drawing on pioneering work dating back to the end of the First World War, there were many references to the “War Office Committee of Enquiry into the Causation and Prevention of Shell Shock” (1922) *The Southborough Report*. London: HMSO.<sup>6</sup> Among the many observations and findings, for our purposes, it was observed that “in a unit where morale was high – one that was well motivated, well led, and well disciplined – cases of “shell shock” had been considerably fewer than in units where these happy circumstances did not apply.”<sup>7</sup> Though the term “shell shock” was decisively rejected by the Southborough Committee, their conclusion that certain positive pre-conditions within units and individuals tended to “inoculate” or enable resilience in the face of traumatic events, has stood the test of time and hard experience. We knew from our RCAF MSS experience that the leadership and overall cohesion for the Blue Team had been strengthened by having an embedded conflict management capacity. Our teams had gained the ability to address conflict issues themselves to maintain mission focus.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter W. Howarth. The treatment of shell-shock: Cognitive therapy before its time. *The Psychiatrist* (2000) 24. pp 225-227 (Royal College of Psychiatrists, London)

<sup>7</sup> 2Gordon Corrigan. *Mud, Blood and Poppycock*. (2003) p. 235

## **The Blue Team Goes Into Combat – CFB Petawawa-Based Task Force 3-08 Afghanistan**

Local leadership at Petawawa needed to be convinced that an internal conflict management capacity would translate into an increased war-fighting capability for their units or enhance soldier survivability, key elements in their measure of mission success. In their view, notwithstanding the successful effect on the operation of RCAF teams at a support base, it was still a far cry from the battlefields of Afghanistan. Moreover, it had never been tried in a combat zone. What risks were we taking if things went wrong and people did not react well? On the other hand, the research was compelling and the work with the air force on the verges of Afghanistan had produced good results. But- and this was the glimmer of light that we were hoping for- if there was even the slightest chance of an enhancement, we could train a representative group.

Given the size of the deploying Battle Group - more than 2,500 personnel - our limited resources and the very high-tempo of pre-deployment training, it was not deemed feasible to train a critical mass of personnel. Instead, we trained a group of 50 volunteers from across a broad cross-section of units, though our preference would have been to focus on one of the smaller units and target for a critical mass there. I couldn't help but smile at the realisation that we were being tolerated much as "snake oil salesmen" that had shown up to peddle our wares while the client was getting ready for the very serious business of war. We convened our courses in Petawawa and settled in to work.

**"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles."**

- Sun Tzu in The Art of War.

Our training teams, drawn from DRCs across the country, included a mix of army, air force, naval and civilian personnel. As an aside, the word "volunteer" in the military often means something very different from the mainstream understanding. Whether a volunteer or "voluntold," the trainees in the classrooms had to believe in the potential pay-off for this commitment of their precious time for our efforts to work.

We asked them to describe their mission in Afghanistan. They told us of patrolling, dominating and stabilising the hundreds of square kilometres in their area of operations and of the time at their strong points –watching and waiting, and how they had to trust and rely on each other and their leaders. They wanted to know what we brought to the fight. We explained that we had an interest in contributing to the success of their mission but that we were interested in dominating only the very first 15 centimetres of the battle space. Amused and mildly perplexed, they wanted to know where that space was to be found. Touching left and right temples, it's the average distance between each soldier's ears – your own and of every soldier in your unit. In that very small space you, your comrades, and your leaders act and react. It is where the battle space begins. Now curious, they wanted to know more as they settled in to work and to learn.

Many of the trainees were old hands who had been on deployed operations before and knew first-hand of the internal and external frictions that occurred. They told of how the success of previous missions had been compromised by internal strife. They knew both faces of the Red Team. They knew and anticipated the one that operated *outside* the wire and the one that operated covertly *inside* the wire. Their eye-witness testimonials that typically enrich adult learning situations did much to add realism and to underline the relevance of what we were hoping to accomplish.

As with previous groups that we had trained, they headed overseas to carry out their mission but with certain significant differences. This group was embarking on a combat mission to Afghanistan as opposed to a support mission from a neighbouring country. We could count on them coming under hostile fire, fighting back, and subjected all the stresses and dangers that that entailed. We also knew that the Red Team would be waiting for them *inside* our own lines. Were our men and women of the Blue Team ready? Would enough of the right stuff have been loaded into their cognitive magazines to fight and neutralise *that* threat? In March 2008, our conflict management trainees headed out as we watched and awaited their return.

Our Task Force 3-08 Afghanistan sub-group returned home six months later and, after a period of settling in, were convened for interviews and completion of our portion of the Post Operations Report. This time, however, we were not alone. We

had attracted the interest of Defence Research and Development Canada -Centre for Operational Research and Analysis (DRDC-CORA). One of their Research Analysts was made available to work with the DRC staff to conduct interviews and to prepare the POR. The questions were the same as before. However, due to the very different nature of the TF 3-08 Mission, some of the answers, though similar in nature, had an unanticipated intensity:

“Hand on heart, if it wasn’t for ADR training I wouldn’t be alive today and maybe even my entire crew.”

“I’ve been on half a dozen tours in the past, [before] I would brow beat someone to death.”

“ADR training has given [me] the ability to see things differently as a leader.”

“The calm listening approach helped us realize how significant this guy’s situation was- he was taken back to KAF [Kandahar Airfield]...saved his life and our lives.”

“I learned that things are deeper than they look. I realized that I needed to find out the nature of the problem – once I saw that, it opened up everything else. When I dug deeper into conflicts, I found out the real causes and was able to help.”

“The course allowed me to nip it [conflict] in the bud before it escalated.”<sup>8</sup>

We were humbled, yet elated. Our combat soldier-subjects were telling us that the performance of the Blue Team had been enhanced by the training that they had received. They related their experiences in cogent, often graphic, but unequivocal terms. As a result of the conflict management skills that they had acquired, the efforts of the Red Team in their environment had been frustrated and that this was helping to bring home more of our men and women sound in body and in mind.

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<sup>8</sup> TF 3-08 Afghanistan POR 17 Jun 10. Paragraphs 7, 8, and 10.

We could not have hoped for better or clearer results. The POR affirmed that, despite the challenges of that location, many conflicts had been effectively managed. Trust, that all important factor in mission success, had been enhanced by listening and reacting decisively at the right moment to defuse the toxicity of conflicts in that lethal environment. Additionally, skills in detecting the genesis of conflict, and conducting respectful dialogue now gave voice to issues, helping to eliminate dissention. Unquestioned mutual reliance had been protected and enhanced, promoting stronger unit cohesion and discipline. The harmful in-fighting that benefitted the Red Team in the past, at least for this portion of the Blue Team, had been overcome.

### **What the Blue Team Taught Us**

Our experiences in support of overseas operations taught us that the efforts of the Blue Team can be greatly advanced by neutralising the gains to the Red Team when it operates in the guise of unmanaged internal conflict. Once that villain is exposed and contained, the Blue Team can fully assert itself. Though I will stop short of suggesting that effective conflict management skills training and practices within the Blue Team are the alpha and omega for mission success, we can acknowledge them to have been a significant contributor to the enhancement of several of our overseas missions. Within the conflict management skill sets reside many of the key enablers for the establishment of unquestioned mutual reliance – trust. Trust in yourself, trust in your teammates, trust in your leaders. In a military context, and almost certainly in the civilian milieu, the attainment of your goals will be undermined if the efforts of the Red Team go unchallenged. Profit from the faith and efforts of these Blue Teams, arm yourself and strike a blow at the Red Team.

**"You will not succeed unless your men have tenacity and unity of purpose, and above all, a spirit of sympathetic cooperation."**

- Sun Tzu in The Art of War.

## Epilogue

Shortly after the missions described above were concluded, the Department of National Defence's Conflict Management Program funding and personnel resources were reduced by approximately 75 percent, as part of the Federal Government's Deficit Reduction Action Plan. This is mentioned so that the reader is not left with the incorrect impression that this work is continuing. My purpose in having written this paper is to capture what I feel to have been among that Program's notable achievements which should be shared with the conflict management community so that they not be lost, should this be considered of value. I would do a grave disservice to the many dedicated men and women of DND's Conflict Management Program that made this work possible, if I failed to acknowledge their spirit of innovation, commitment and professionalism, often under exceedingly trying circumstances, who made this work possible.

## About the Author



Tim Gushue, MMM, CD, BA (Major RCAF-Retired). Tim served in the RCAF from July 1981 until November 2012 and specialised in Personnel Administration, Human Dimensions planning and research and in conflict management. In addition to service at locations throughout Canada, Tim has served at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), Casteau, Belgium; United States Central Command, McDill Air Force Base, Florida and on the NATO Headquarters staff at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. The last position held in the RCAF was as Regional Manager-Conflict Management Services (Central Canada) and Conflict Management Advisor (Air Force) from 2004 to 2012, except while on sabbatical (2008-2009) at the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (Future Concepts Development section), 8 Wing Trenton as the Human Dimensions lead, and co-author of the book "Projecting Power. Canada's Air Force in 2035". Tim was appointed a Member of the Order of Military Merit (MMM) in 2003.