

Canadian Armed Forces

As everyone here knows I am extremely proud of all our veterans for their supreme involvement in insuring that I have a safe and free world to live in.

I am selfish in that my father, was a member of this great nations armed forces during the second world war and he served with distinction in France Belgium and the Netherlands. He was wounded coming into Holland and as a result met my mother whom he later married.

For much of the 20th century, Canada was torn in two directions. It seemed to be a part of the old world, yet had an address in the new one, and that divided identity ensured that is never fully got the gratitude it deserved.

Yet it's purely voluntary contribution to the cause of freedom in two world wars was perhaps the greatest of any democracy. Almost 10 percent of Canada's population of seven million people served during the first world war and nearly 60,000 died. The great allied victories of 1918 were spearheaded by the Canadian troops, perhaps the most capable soldiers in the entire British order of battle.

The second world war provided a re-run. The Canadian navy began the war with a half dozen vessels and ended up policing nearly half of the Atlantic against u-boat attack. More than 120 Canadian warships participated in the Normandy landings, during which 15.000 Canadian soldiers went ashore on D-day alone.

Canada finished the war with the third largest navy and the fourth largest air force in the world.

Canada is every bit aware of the achievements of its sons and daughters as the world is completely unaware of them. The Canadians proudly say of themselves – and are unheard by anyone else - that 1 percent of the world's population has provided 10 percent of the world's peacekeeping forces.

Canadian soldiers in the past half century have been the greatest peacekeepers on earth – in 39 missions on the UN mandates, and six on non-UN peacekeeping duties, from Vietnam to East Timor, from Sinai to Bosnia

Rather like Cyrano de Bergerac, Canada repeatedly does honourable things for honourable motives, but instead of being thanked for it, it remains something of a figure of fun. It is the Canadian way, for which Canadians should be proud, yet such honor comes at a high cost. The past year grieving Canadian families knew that cost all too tragically well.

This all brings to mind the address to the brethren we have all learned to love and try so hard adhere to.

If you see a man who quietly and modestly moves in the sphere of his life, Who without blemish, fulfills his duty as a man, a subject, a husband and a father. Who is pious without hypocrisy, benevolent without ostentation, and aids his fellowman without self-interest. Whose heart beats warm for friendship, whose serene mind is open for licensed pleasures, who in vicissitudes does not despair, nor in fortune will be presumptuous, and who will be resolute in the hour of danger. **YOU WILL SEE OUR CANADIAN SOLDIERS . GOD BLESS THEM**

God and the soldier we like adore

In times of danger not before

The danger past and all conflict righted

God is forgotten the soldier slighted

So Mote It Be

The bulk of this paper was gleaned from an article in a British newspaper and I have edited it for brevity and to honor our soldiers.

D.A. WOOLDRIDGE