

PART III - THE ROLE OF THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES IN SURVEILLANCE*The Cyclic Character of the History of
the Canadian Armed Forces*

Since the beginning of this century the size of the Canadian Armed Forces has undergone a series of major fluctuations, the reasons for which have been dramatic changes in the world situation and a vacillating policy regarding the desirable magnitude of the Canadian contribution to defence.

Based on a tiny permanent force of about 3,000 and a healthy militia (about 60,000 strong), recruiting of volunteers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War I raised a very large army. The technology of the day allowed armaments to be manufactured and soldiers trained within a period of a few months. Eventually, heavy casualties made conscription necessary, and by 1918 the number of Canadians who had enlisted had attained a peak of around 628,000, drawn from a total population of about 8,000,000.³⁸

In 1919 this large force was demobilized, leaving a very small permanent force which fell to less than 4,000, and numbered about 5,200 in 1935, with air and sea as well as land elements, but a strong and enthusiastic reserve force over 49,000 strong.³⁹

A similar cycle was repeated in 1939, when World War II began with Canada's permanent force numbering about 8,000, and the reserves about 54,000. Large numbers volunteered for air force and navy as well as army service. Manufacture of aircraft, warships, tanks, radar, sonar, and weapons required considerably more time than in the first war, as did the training necessary to make effective airmen, sailors, and soldiers. It took many months before Canada was able to make a sizeable contribution, but the war lasted nearly six years and over one million Canadians enlisted. Again, casualties obliged

³⁸ C.P. Stacey, *The Military Problems of Canada*, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1940, pp. 76 - 77.

³⁹ C.P. Stacey, *Arms, Men, and Governments: The War Policies of Canada 1939 - 1945*, Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1970, pp. 1 - 5.