

entire Canadian Forces Base Petawawa (home to the Airborne) 'appear to be one of the several areas where right-wing activities are centered.'<sup>42</sup>

Other revelations followed. In November, lawyers for the Canadian Jewish Congress alleged that members of the Airborne held a celebratory dinner to honour Marc Lepine, the man who massacred 14 women at the Université de Montréal in 1989. A former member of the Airborne confirmed the dinner had taken place and commented, '... it would have been the same as having an Adolf Hitler party on his birthday... It's just the shock value.'<sup>43</sup>

One of the questions which Inquiry Commissioners posed to many witnesses in the first phase of the hearings concerned a number of incidents involving the Airborne prior to its deployment to Somalia. The first was a reported 'torching' of an officer's car at the base and the second was a shooting spree by members of the Airborne within a nearby provincial park. The Commissioners wondered aloud whether officers should have taken these incidents more seriously and as evidence of a real problem of command and control within the regiment.

Retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie's response to these questions was revealing. He suggested that because the Somalia mission had been upgraded from a Chapter VI (peacekeeping) mission to a Chapter VII (peace enforcement) mission, the soldiers were all 'psyched up', and though he did not want to excuse their behaviour prior to deployment, he thought that excitement might explain these incidents. He pointed out that there had only been three Chapter VII missions in UN history to that point: Korea, the Gulf War and Somalia. Somalia had become 'a non-blue beret fight, as it were', and that while 'some of this is macho stuff', there was 'more prestige' for Airborne soldiers being deployed on a Chapter VII mission than a Chapter VI.<sup>44</sup> There is more prestige, in other words, for soldiers to be involved in a mission of real soldiering, in which they are no longer restricted to firing only in self-defence.

In addition to these various revelations, one of the first documents tabled at the inquiry confirmed what feminists have long argued:<sup>45</sup> the level of violence against women is disproportionately high within militaries, and this is true also of the Canadian military. The Hewson Report was a 1985 inquiry into infractions and antisocial behaviour within the Mobile Command, with particular reference to the Special Service Force and the Canadian Airborne Regiment. Major-General Hewson had been charged with investigating whether there was a

higher rate of disciplinary infractions (i.e. criminal behaviour) within the Canadian forces than within Canadian society more generally. The report was initiated after a series of media stories covering crimes by Airborne members, one of which involved the murder of a civilian with a machete.<sup>46</sup>

Hewson reported that there was no higher incidence of crime within the Canadian Forces, and in fact 'there appears to be a lower incidence of serious pathology and violent behaviour in the CF than in the Canadian population at large.'<sup>47</sup> However, two important qualifications were noted, the first was that while there was a lower incidence of violent crime more generally, there was 'a relatively higher frequency of sexual offences which should be further investigated.' The second was that within the Canadian Forces, there was a higher incidence of violent crime within the Canadian Airborne Regiment.

Hewson's explanation for the higher incidence of violent crime within the Airborne relied on explicitly gendered arguments and focused on the 'characteristics' of local residents and the concentration of single soldiers in Petawawa. The Report noted that 'Due to the physical nature of local industry (lumber and agriculture) the local civilian male population is considered robust and tough.'<sup>48</sup> Add to this a concentration of single male soldiers, the report noted, and there resulted the potential for violence, particularly in 'disputes over girls':

When compared to a relatively small local female population, this high concentration of young single soldiers creates an unbalanced, artificial society which is a source of undue stress to many servicemen. The young single soldier with his new 'sporty' car, regular and higher pay and job security has a tendency [*sic*] to attract the local female population; this further antagonizes the local male population already frustrated (particularly so in Quebec) by the high level of unemployment. This creates a highly volatile situation; the local civilian police on both sides of the river state that most incidents of violence are over girls.<sup>49</sup>

The report had comparatively less comment to make on the higher incidence of sexual assaults within the Canadian Forces, noting only that it deserved further study. Further studies were not forthcoming, perhaps in part because Hewson never indicated *how much* higher the level of sexual assaults were.<sup>50</sup> In fact, however, an appendix outlining 'crime case synopses' for 1984/85 indicates that the number of