

protecting Britain's vital link to the resources of the free world.

The Royal Canadian Navy soon became the third largest in the Allied forces. It reached a full complement of 440 fighting ships and 95,705 men and women. It accounted for the destruction of 27 German U-Boats and 42 surface ships.

Canada's strength was also evident in the air. The RCAF filled its ranks with a quarter of a million Canadians and mustered 88 operational squadrons. During the Battle of Britain they scored 74 'kills' and 'probables'. On one day alone RCAF fighters shot down a record 26 enemy aircraft and damaged dozens more. With other Commonwealth colleagues, Canadian pilots proudly joined the few, to whom so much is owed.

Of the 730,625 Canadians who served with the Army, 22,917 were killed, and more than 52,000 wounded, enough to fill the stands of a huge football stadium. These were devastating statistics to a country with a population of less than 15 million.

When the final victory came in 1945, the world sighed a collective expression of relief, but this time Canada, like Britain, was not lulled back into a false sense of security. When South Korea was attacked, both countries contributed to the United Nations peacekeeping force with manpower, money and military supplies. Canadian initiatives in creating the UN peacekeeping force at Suez after the 1956 war earned the then Canadian foreign minister, Mike Pearson, a Nobel Prize, and Canadian forces have been invited to participate in every UN peacekeeping operation since. Today Canadians still wear the bright blue of the UN berets in Cyprus, and the Golan Heights, Sinai and Kashmir.

In addition to meeting its obligations to the international community as peacekeepers, Canada has also supported a sizeable NATO brigade group in West Germany, and committed a percentage of its airpower to the defence of Europe.

But by the 1960s, military and political thinking were changing in Canada. The Government was looking for ways to achieve greater economies in military spending while at the same time improving the efficiency, flexibility, and manpower utilization of its armed forces.



*Wet Confab* by Meredith Evans 1975. (Pen and ink, and watercolour)

The entire structure of the military community was dissected and examined piece by piece. The result was an apparently simple decision, but one which resulted in a complicated and controversial plan to try something unique in military history: the combination of the three services into a single force.

Its essentials called for the integration of the Army, Navy, and Air Force into one organization, eliminating the distinguishing uniforms of the three services, requiring every enlisted man and officer to wear a common dark green uniform regardless of area of service. The programme met with immediate resistance from traditionalists both inside and outside the Forces, curiosity from Canada's allies, and almost total indifference from the Canadian public. In 1981, thirteen years after becoming simply the Canadian Armed Forces, there are very few serving regulars who remember the old system, but the jury is still out on the ultimate success of the experiment. Unification is