

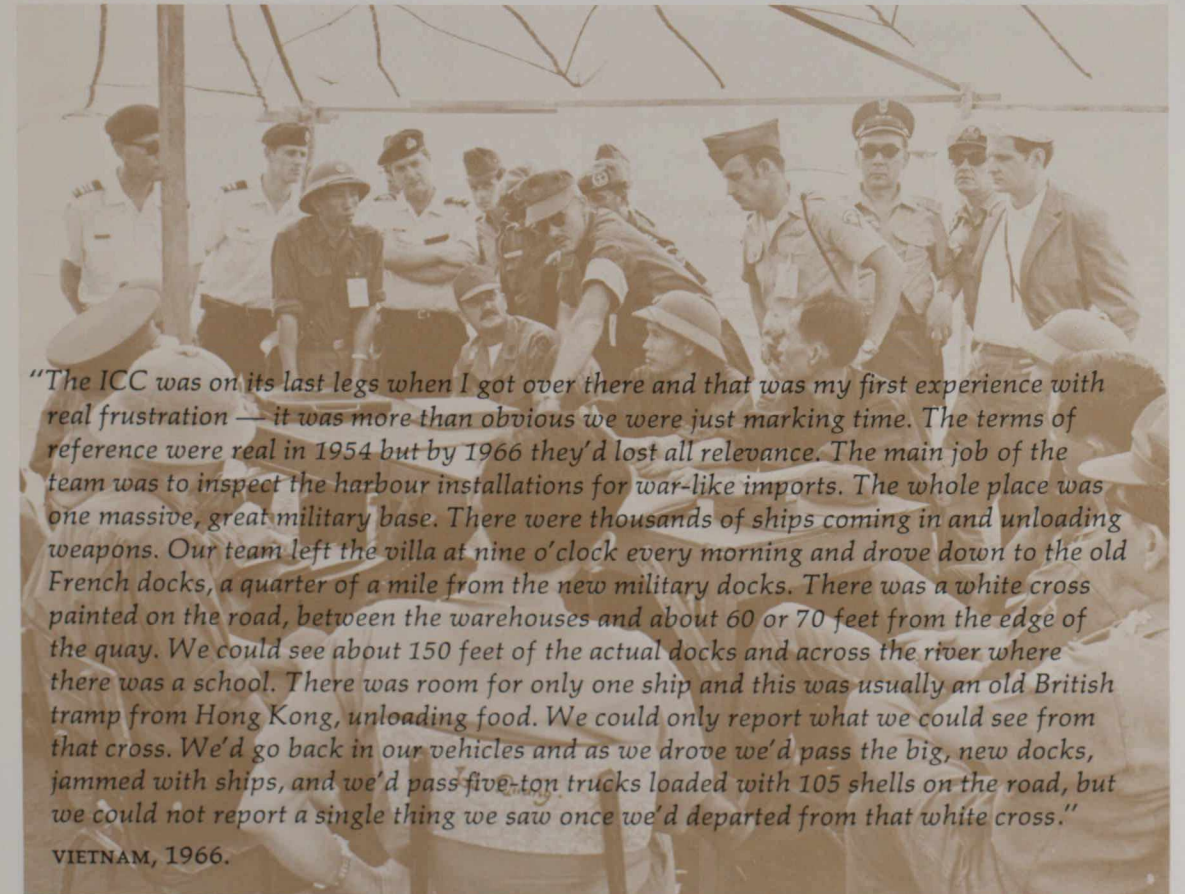
It began with a basis of reality; there was something resembling peace and there were "violations" of that peace which could be counted and reported. The semblance of peace would soon disappear and the job of controlling hostilities would, in the hard word of External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp, become a "farce."

In May, 1967, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser abruptly ended Canada's long tour of duty with the UNEF in Egypt. He ordered the peacekeepers home, a move which left the average Canadian with a mixed feeling of surprise and outrage. The withdrawal was soon followed by the Six Day War and the Middle East was plunged into new difficulties. The UN and Canada would return in force, but the setback in 1967 underscored two points: Peacekeeping is a fragile thing, and while it is a useful aid in achieving a permanent peace settlement, it is not an alternative.

In time the Canadian role in Vietnam would also end, and when efforts were made to enlist Canada in a new International Commission for Control and Supervision, which would monitor the peace treaty reached in Paris, there was a new hesitation. Mr. Sharp said the government was resolved that "Canada should not take part in a charade in which they would be required to supervise not a cease-fire but continuing and possibly

escalating hostilities." Canada did join the ICCS on a provisional basis, specifying that it should be free to investigate alleged violations of the treaty in all parts of Vietnam and that the Commission have workable reporting procedures. The procedures did not prove workable. For example, Capt. Charles E. Laviolette, a Canadian, and eight other peacekeepers were killed when an ICCS helicopter was shot down by a missile. Canada and the other ICCS members investigated but were unable to agree on such simple basics as whether it was an "incident" or an "accident." The *Montreal Star* summed up the general Canadian reaction: "Normal risks are to be expected in a country that has had cause to be trigger-sensitive for a quarter century. The risks can be accepted. But it is something else when delicate zones remain immune from inspection or must be widely by-passed because of gunfire. . . . If routine travel, or indeed, the possibility of looking at controversial sites is to be denied to us, then we have no reason to stay in Vietnam."

The ineffectiveness of the ICCS became increasingly apparent and after some months, Canada withdrew. Canada was not willing to go anywhere, under any circumstances, and remain indefinitely, in the name of peacekeeping. It would remain committed to the practical pursuit of peace but the romantic phase was clearly over.



*"The ICC was on its last legs when I got over there and that was my first experience with real frustration — it was more than obvious we were just marking time. The terms of reference were real in 1954 but by 1966 they'd lost all relevance. The main job of the team was to inspect the harbour installations for war-like imports. The whole place was one massive, great military base. There were thousands of ships coming in and unloading weapons. Our team left the villa at nine o'clock every morning and drove down to the old French docks, a quarter of a mile from the new military docks. There was a white cross painted on the road, between the warehouses and about 60 or 70 feet from the edge of the quay. We could see about 150 feet of the actual docks and across the river where there was a school. There was room for only one ship and this was usually an old British tramp from Hong Kong, unloading food. We could only report what we could see from that cross. We'd go back in our vehicles and as we drove we'd pass the big, new docks, jammed with ships, and we'd pass five-ton trucks loaded with 105 shells on the road, but we could not report a single thing we saw once we'd departed from that white cross."*

VIETNAM, 1966.