

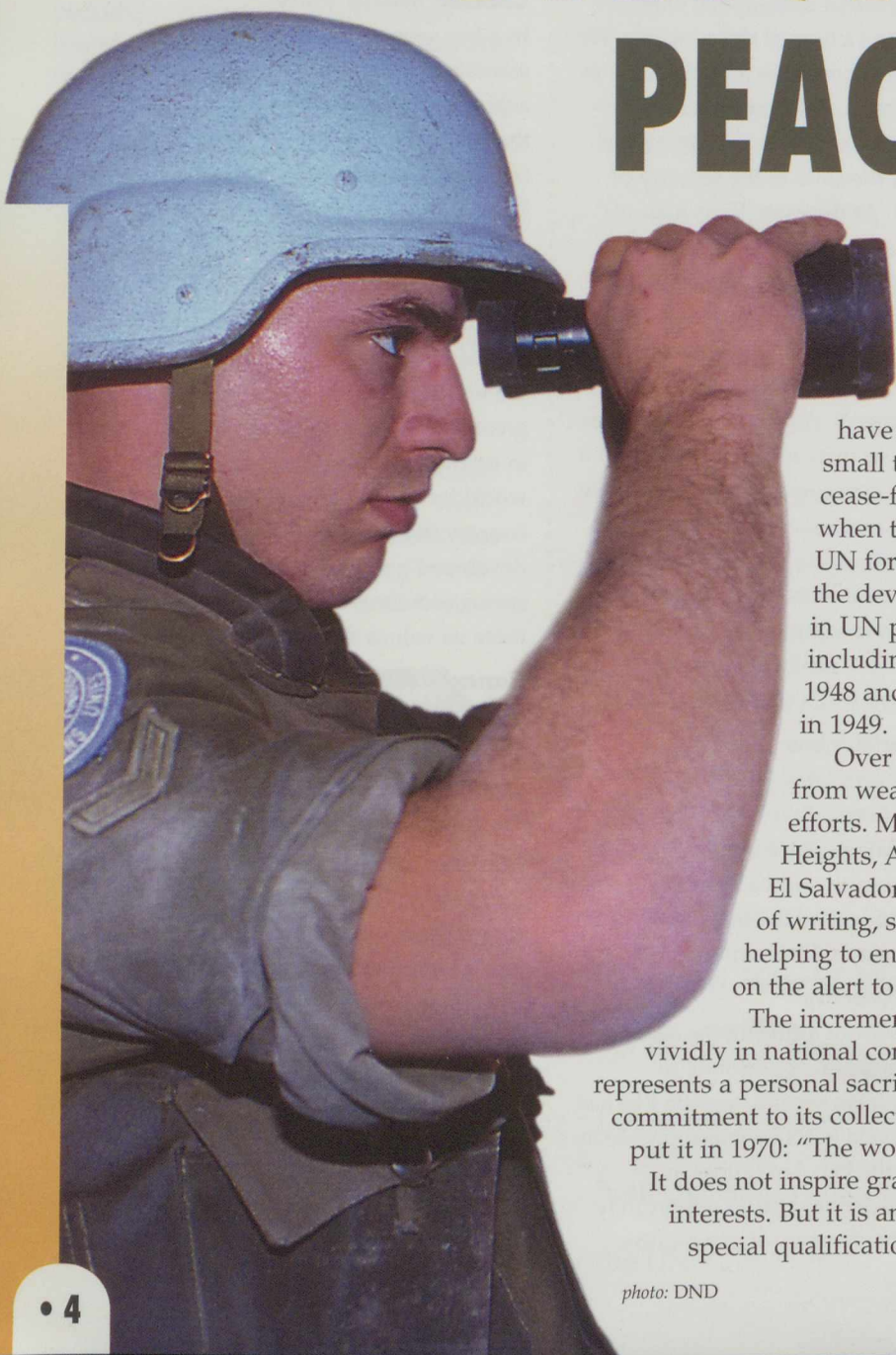
THE BLUE BERET AND THE RED MAPLE LEAF

With eight years of peacekeeping experience under his belt, Master Corporal Lorne Mann is no stranger to the trouble spots of the post-war world. Serving under the UN banner, he has seen the impact of genocide in Rwanda and warlord-induced starvation in Somalia without becoming discouraged.

Master Corporal Mann is a member of a Canadian battle group of 800 personnel who are part of a NATO-led force keeping the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and he remains optimistic and undiscouraged. "When I patrol the villages and countryside of Bosnia, I see a country of great potential," he says. "There are always the constant reminders of the battles — bullet holes, homes destroyed. But the bottom line is the people. When I see them rebuilding their homes and villages, it has an impact on me and my fellow soldiers."

The former Yugoslavia has been the scene of the largest Canadian military deployment since Korea. Of over 2,000 Canadians serving on UN or other peace missions in October 1998, over 60% were in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

CANADIAN PEACEKEEPING AND THE UN



Since the end of World War II, some 80,000 Canadians have served on peace or humanitarian operations large and small throughout the world. These include monitoring of cease-fires in Cyprus and in the Sinai Desert starting in 1956 when the UN applied Lester B. Pearson's concept of placing a UN force between Israeli and Egyptian forces — a milestone in the development of peacekeeping. Canada has been taking part in UN peacekeeping and related missions for half a century, including the two earliest, supervision of elections in Korea in 1948 and observing the cease-fire between India and Kashmir in 1949.

Over the years, Canadians have taken part in missions ranging from weapons control and mine removal to humanitarian rescue efforts. Mission locations have included Namibia, the Golan Heights, Angola, Cambodia, Rwanda, Somalia, Haiti and El Salvador. New calls to duty come in by the year. At the time of writing, six Canadian CF-18 fighters based in Italy have been helping to enforce the NATO no-fly zone over Bosnia and were on the alert to take action in Kosovo, if required.

The incremental casualties of peacekeeping do not register as vividly in national consciousness as those of all-out war. But each casualty represents a personal sacrifice in the cause of peace and the fulfilment of a commitment to its collective protection. As a parliamentary committee report put it in 1970: "The work of peacekeeping is not glamorous. It is frustrating. It does not inspire gratitude. It does not directly assist narrow Canadian interests. But it is an essential service... one for which Canada has special qualifications." ●—

photo: DND